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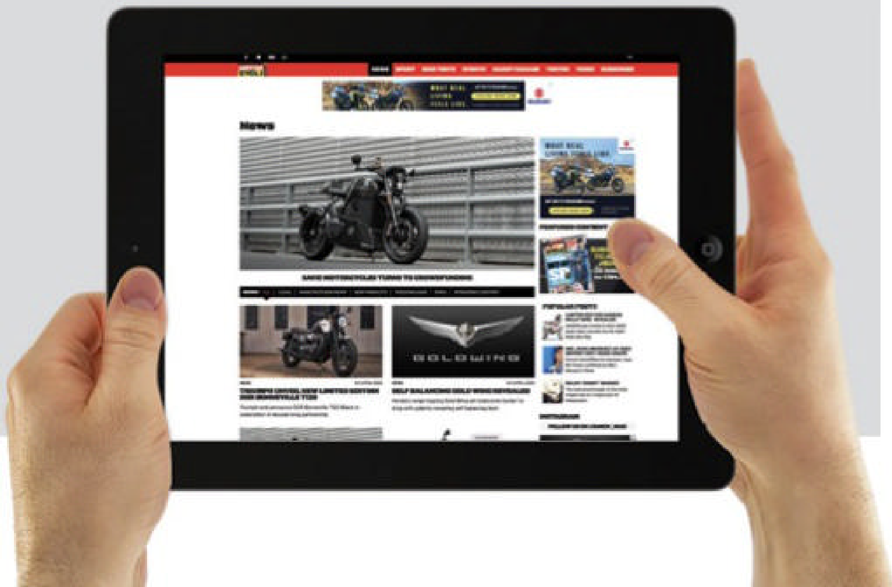

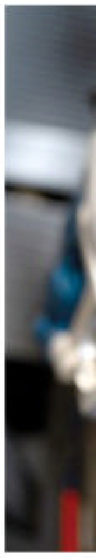

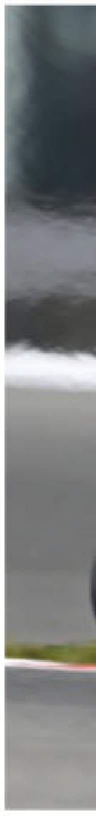

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V4 S

COVER STORY

First ride: Ducati Streetfighter V4 S

Muscular, fierce, sublime and gorgeous

88

ED'S DESK. DEAN MELLOR

> "LIKE ABS, OTHER TRACTION AIDS WILL LIKELY ONE DAY BE MANDATED BY GOVERNMENT"

BIKES THAT can steer themselves and not fall over? It appears the technology is closer than we might think, at least according to Japanese manufacturers Honda and Yamaha it is.

Yamaha's Advanced Motorcycle Stabilization Assist System (AMSAS) consists of a steering-assist system and an electric drive mounted on the front wheel to provide stability at low speed. It can be mounted to any bike.

Honda has developed a self-balancing system ostensibly for use on its flagship Goldwing, allowing riders to move the big beast around at walking speeds without fear of it toppling over.

Some modern motorcycles are already packed with tech to help riders avoid accidents, such as radar cruise control, autonomous emergency braking and lane-change warning systems. And then there are the traction aids we've become accustomed to including cornering ABS and traction control, wheelie control, tailorable riding modes and more.

As this technology becomes more common (and affordable) it is no longer only fitted to top-end models, but filters down to more affordable bikes, as evidenced by the 2023 Yamaha YZF-R15M tested in this issue, which scores selectable ride modes and TC... and even a quickshifter. The Suzuki V-Strom 800DE also in this issue is equipped with a decent suite of rider aids too, and the high-end Ducati Streetfighter V4 S we have track-tested is jam-packed with the full monty of traction tech.

It was only a few years ago that we were discussing whether this tech was necessary on bikes at all, but it seems as though we soon won't have a choice and every new motorcycle on the market will at least feature some level of electronic traction aids.

Is all this tech this good for motorcycling? Abso-bloody-lutely! Especially on bikes that boast close to 200hp or more. But it's even good on bikes like the R15M that make less than 20hp, machines aimed at inexperienced riders who sometimes need all the help they can get.

I know many will be thinking 'I didn't need all that tech back in my day', and for those dead set against progress there are still plenty of new bikes on the market without TC and other tech, but I don't think this will always be the case: like ABS, other traction aids will likely one day be mandated by government.

But that's not a bad thing; I've ridden plenty of bikes packed with all the tech you could dream of and they're still bloody great fun. Self-steering though? I'm not too sure about that... Deano

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The yet-to-be seen Roctane will be pretty different to this version marking BMW's 100th anniversary

BUSTED!

1800cc
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AKRAPOVIC

BMW ROCS R 18

Roctane variant sprung! Well, on paper at least

This time last year BMW trademarked the name 'Roctane' to use on a motorcycle. Now we can reveal this will be a significantly revised version of the R 18 cruiser with a stance and style unlike any of the four existing variants.

The R 18 Roctane has been type-approved in Europe, meaning key dimensions and performance figures have been put on paper. Even in the absence of a photograph, the numbers reveal that the Roctane is a distinct departure from the existing R 18 range.

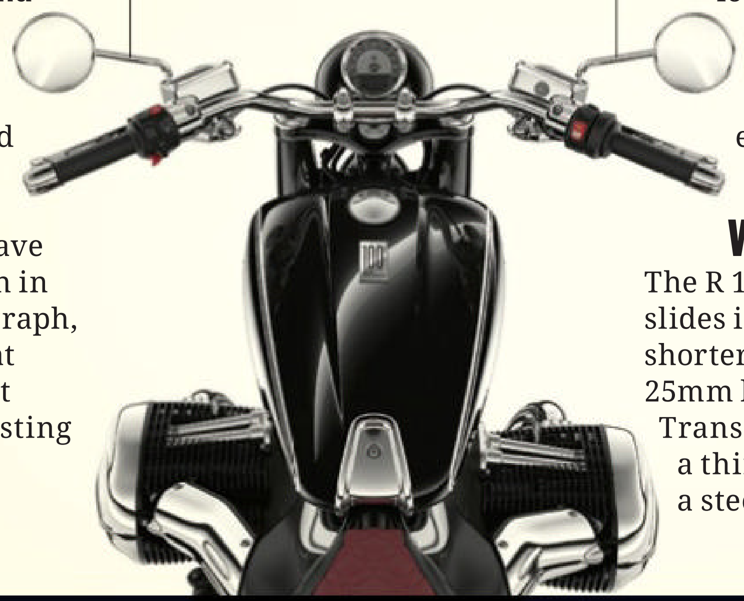
At present, the four R 18 models can be split into two groups. There's the original R 18 and the R 18 Classic, both based around a 32.7-degree head angle and a 1731mm wheelbase, while the heavier R 18 B and R 18 Transcontinental tourer models use a steeper 27.3-degree head angle and a shorter 1695mm wheelbase. Despite the shorter wheelbase, the B and Transcontinental are longer overall thanks to extended exhausts, longer rear fenders and hard side bags extending behind the rear wheel.

What's different?

The R 18 Roctane's wheelbase slides in at 1720mm, 11mm shorter than the base R 18 and 25mm longer than the B or Transcontinental, hinting at a third chassis setup with a steering head angle that splits the difference between the existing options.

At 2615mm overall it is longer than the R 18 B (2560mm), but slightly less than the Transcontinental (2660mm thanks to a top case that overhangs the rear). Despite their longer wheelbase, the standard R 18 and R 18 Classic are shorter at 2440mm. The Roctane's length can be attributed to the combination of a more stretched-out head angle than the B or Continental, while the approval documents confirm it uses the same long, low-slung dual exhaust as the Transcontinental and R 18 B.

Like the rest of the R 18 range, the Roctane is type-



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BAG FULL OF ATTITUDE

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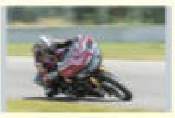


approved to use a wide array of wheels and tyres, including a 21-inch front, 18-inch rear combination, the 19-inch front and 16-inch rear sizes used by the standard R 18, R 18 B and R 18 Transcontinental, and the 16-inch front and rear setup of the Classic. That means we can't guess at which setup will be standard.

Different dimensions

Further clues to the design come from its height, width and weight. The lowest version of the Roctane is 1206mm, compared to 1120mm for the base R 18 – hinting either at a taller handlebar or a small screen. The approvals show it can also be had with a height of 1418mm, which isn't as high as the 1500mm of the Transcontinental's screen, but surely indicates the presence of some sort of front cowl.

Width-wise, the Roctane is the biggest of all, coming in at 982mm, suggesting its handlebar is broader than other versions.

In terms of weight, the approval figures of all the R 18 models don't correspond perfectly with BMW's own claims, but the paperwork shows the Roctane will be heavier than the base R 18 and R 18 Classic, but lighter than either the R 18 B or R 18 Transcontinental. Using the approval weight as a guide, claimed kerb weight will be around the 370kg mark.

Power and torque are identical to the other R 18 models, with 67kW (91hp) at 4750rpm and 158Nm at 3000rpm from the huge, 1802cc air-cooled boxer twin.

BEN PURVIS

HIGH-SPEC PURSUIT

INDIAN IS about to launch an 'Elite' version of its liquid-cooled Pursuit tourer with documents confirming its existence emerging in both Europe and Australia. It was first named in approval filings in Australia a few weeks ago and has now been approved in Europe, along with the remainder of the 2023 Indian range, suggesting a launch is imminent.

While type-approvals sometimes give clues to substantial technical changes, in this instance they tell us that the Pursuit Elite will be all but identical to the existing versions.

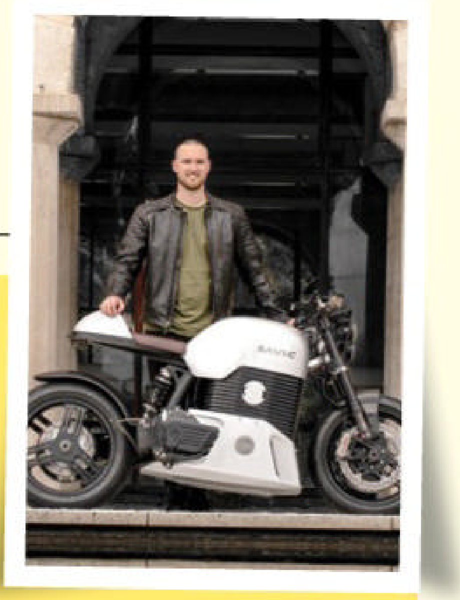
This suggests its updates will come in alterations to appearance and equipment levels rather than substantial mechanical revisions. That's in line with existing 'Elite' variants of the Chieftain and Challenger, which are limited-edition machines with a smattering of optional extras and distinctive paintwork to set them apart.

The approval documents show the Pursuit Elite has the same 1768cc V-twin engine as the base model, with an identical 90.1kW (122.5hp) output at 5500rpm and 177.5Nm at 3800rpm.

Its weight, at 424kg, is identical to that of the current Pursuit Premium Package, and 3kg more than the base version of the model.

With no change to the physical dimensions, we expect updates to the electronics, infotainment equipment and the appearance.

Although the Australian approval does include photos, they show a standard Pursuit (pictured), not the real Elite version. **BP**



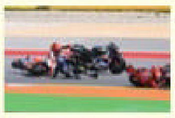
SAVIC PLUGS INTO PEOPLE POWER

MELBOURNE-BASED start-up Savic Motorcycles has launched a crowdfunding campaign to help finance the production of the first 100 units of its C-Series electric café racer, recently tested by AMCN (Vol 72 No 18).

The crowdfunding campaign is being done in partnership with Equitise, a leading Australian investment platform that connects startups with investors looking to support new and innovative ventures. Funds will also support the launch of international exports for Savic Motorcycles, which has already attracted global attention along with a swag of design and innovation awards.

"Demand is growing and, with more than 250 pre-orders, we want to scale up manufacturing to deliver our bikes to Australian riders as well as bringing our premium products to new riders around the world," said CEO and founder, Dennis Savic.

The first Savic model has full ADR compliance, offers 200Nm of torque and is claimed to accelerate from 0-100km in just 3.5 seconds. Its 16.2kWh battery can be plugged into a conventional home power point socket. For more information visit equitise.com/offer/savic-motorcycles. **HAMISH COOPER**



IN PIT LANE COLUMN
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MOTOGP, SPEEDWAY, CONDO & LIFESAVING
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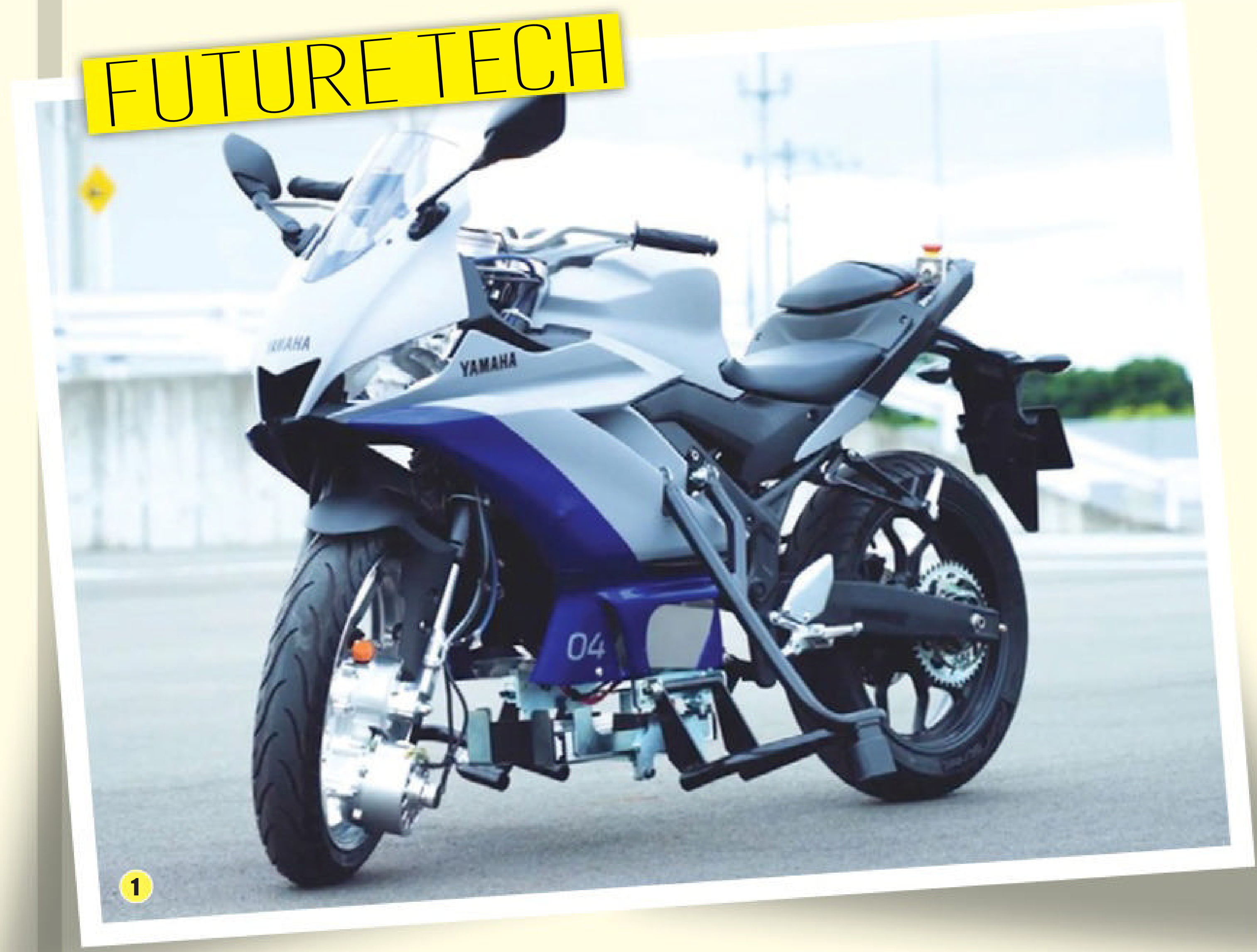
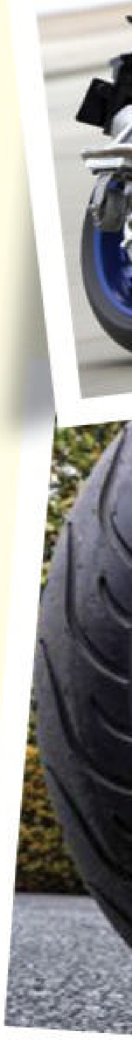
1. The two main features are the steering-assist system and electric drive on the front wheel **2.** The R3 is the basis for Yamaha's latest safety vision – although the tech can be bolted to any bike **3.** Yamaha's MOTOBOT, unveiled in 2015 **4.** The electric drive's mandate is to provide stability at low speeds

FUTURE TECH





SAFETY FIRST!

Inside a weirdo world of motorcycle safety development

Yamaha and Honda have set the challenging target of eliminating motorcycle fatalities by 2050, which is only a couple of generations of machine development away. That means the relevant technology needs to be introduced to production motorcycles within the next few years.

At present car safety features such as radar-assisted cruise control and lane assist are filtering down to motorcycles. However, behind the scenes a much great revolution of design is unfolding with the aim of making motorcycling fatality-free.

Idiot-proof R3

Yamaha's recent announcement of its Jin-Ki Kanno x Jin-Ki Anzen Safety Vision program gives an insight into both the technology and the theories behind it. Its reveal of Yamaha's Advanced Motorcycle Stabilization Assist System (AMSAS) prototype demonstrates key elements of that tech.

THE 'PILLARS' OF ITS STRATEGY ARE TECHNOLOGY THAT ASSISTS WITH RIDER RECOGNITION, JUDGMENT, OPERATION AND DAMAGE MITIGATION

Yamaha says the 'pillars' of its strategy are technology that assists with rider recognition, judgment, operation and damage mitigation; encouraging the improvement of users' riding skills; and connectivity, where the cloud provides feedback for safety initiatives.

Research undertaken by Yamaha has revealed three contributing factors to accidents: recognition errors (10 percent), decision errors (17 percent) and rider operation errors (five percent). Data also indicates that around 70 percent of motorcycle accidents occur within two seconds of the contributing factor.

Based on this research, Yamaha is focusing on assisted danger prediction, damage prevention and assisted defensive riding, assisted evasive riding manoeuvres and damage mitigation.

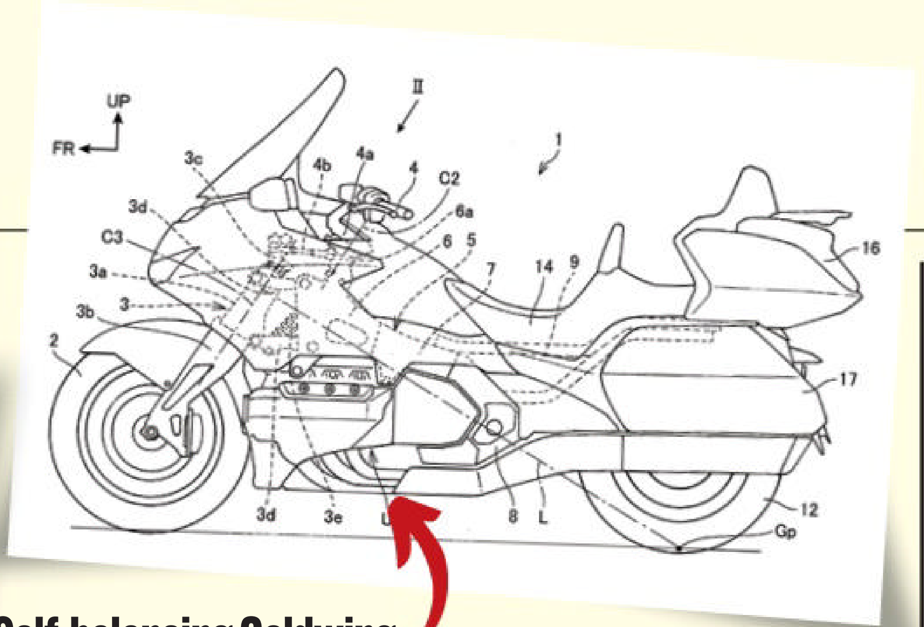
The prototype displays key elements of the new technology, which could be bolted to virtually any Yamaha model, but in this case it's the R3. They're made up of a steering-assist system that can turn the handlebar automatically to help keep a rider upright, along with an electric drive mounted on the front wheel that provides stability at low speed.

"Its most distinctive feature is its approach to use, which is highly applicable to existing vehicles since it does not require any modifications to the frame," says Project Leader Akitoshi Suzuki. "When starting or stopping, the drive actuator fitted to the front wheel aids with stability, and from there up to about 5km/h the steering actuator attached to the handlebars takes over."

Through the coordination of the two, the mid-development AMSAS prototype vehicle can move at walking speeds without falling over. Yamaha made headlines when it unveiled the MOTOBOT in 2015, an autonomous motorcycle-riding robot, followed by the MOTOROiD, a proof-of-concept experimental motorcycle equipped with AI and self-balancing technology.

Yamaha has already introduced rider aids aimed at helping out tired and distracted riders. The main one is the radar-linked unified brake system, the first of its kind in the world, deployed on overseas versions of the Tracer 9 GT. A version of the steering-assist system on the AMSAS prototype has already been seen on some of Yamaha's works motocross racers. In this case it doubles as an active steering damper and a power steering system.

HAMISH COOPER



Self-balancing Goldwing

Honda Riding Assist program has been operating for six years. The latest development is a self-balancing Goldwing. This model has been the subject of a wide range of patent applications related to a next-generation version to be released within the next few years with the focus on rider-assist systems intended to make it harder to crash.

The latest application shows that the future Goldwing won't only help while you're riding, but also when you're pushing it around. The system seen in the new patent document is based on a setup that's already been subject of several other patents, namely a steering-assist system for the Goldwing.

The same mechanical components – an electric steering servo that sits alongside the headstock and can act as both power-assistance and as an accident prevention system when combined with a variety of sensors – are carried over, but with new electronics that add the ability to assist while you're pushing the bike around at walking pace.

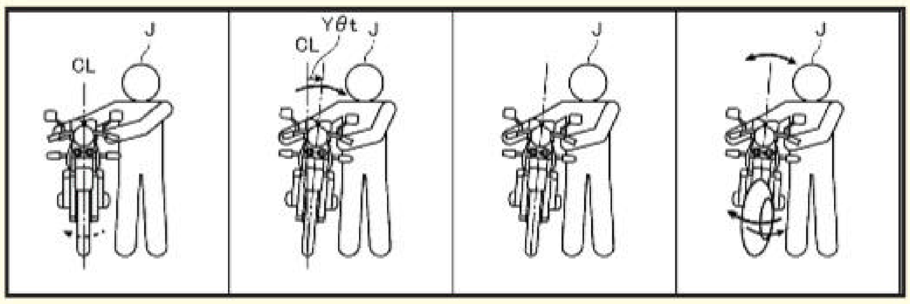
The entire system is related to the original Honda Riding Assist and Riding Assist-E concept bikes revealed in 2017. These were able to balance themselves – even when stationary – by simply turning the front wheel to shift the centre of gravity.

The version being patented now, specifically designed with the Goldwing's girder-style front suspension in mind, doesn't try to be quite that ambitious, but uses the combination of a steering servo and sensors measuring the bike's lean angle to make it easier to move. It's likely to be combined with an electric low-speed manoeuvring system that can power the bike backwards or forwards.

The system shown in Honda's patent application quite simply turns the steering left or right as needed to keep the bike at just the right angle to make it easy to push around, never letting it adopt too much lean or allowing it to tilt away from the rider.

While riding, the same steering servo has been shown in other patents to act as both a steering damper and a power steering system. It can also be used to intervene in emergencies, combined with sensors such as radars and cameras (already patented for the Goldwing) to steer around obstacles or work with adaptive cruise as a lane-assist system.

A question still hangs over when we'll see this technology in production, but since rival brands are currently getting an edge over Honda in terms of rider-assist systems, it won't be too long. **BEN PURVIS**



GUZZI'S DREAM MACHINE ARRIVES

TWO VERSIONS of Moto Guzzi's innovative, all-new V100 Mandello arrive in Australia late next month, priced from $28,290 (ride away), marking the start of the Italian heritage brand's second century of operation.

The first model to use Moto Guzzi's new compact block, liquid-cooled, 90-degree V-twin engine, the Mandello also is the world's first production model to feature adaptive aerodynamics. It also comes with a six-axis inertial platform that helps control its cornering ABS and semi-active suspension.

Dry weight is claimed 212kg, and the 1042cc transversely mounted engine puts out 84.6kW (115hp) at 8700rpm and 105Nm of torque, with 82 percent of that available as low as 3500rpm.

A quickshifter for the six-speed gearbox comes standard and there is a huge range of accessories so owners can modify the Mandello for touring or sports riding.

The base-model V100 Mandello is available in Bianco Polare and Rosso Magma colour schemes at $28,290 ride away. The higher-spec Mandello S comes in Verde 2121 or Grigio Avanguardia colours for $32,290 ride away.

HAMISH COOPER

BRIEFS. YOUR QUICK FIX

DID YOU KNOW? It's 20 years since Barry Sheene died. Hamish Cooper reveals the human side of the Cockney hero in this issue's Old School column, page 97

"We're the last independent distributor of this size or scale in the region"

The scale and size bit in UMI CEO Joe Elasmar's quote is important, because we name UMI as the *only* independent distributor in our intriguing interview with him on page 60. So to the Clare Maillers (Ural), Patrick Lowrys (Beta, YCF) and Tobin Pages (Energica) of the world, we're sorry!

2,000,000

That's how many kays WorldSBK riders have logged on Pirelli rubber during two decades of competition. Mark Fattore spent a day at the Island recently sampling the latest fare from the Italian tyre manufacturer. Check it out on page 54

MIKE'S FIRST BIKE

It's not often that something belonging to Mike "the Bike" Hailwood comes up for sale. This time it's the 1960 Ducati 125cc Desmodromic 'Barcone' he won the 125cc British championship with - one of just four produced that year for GP racing. Acquired from the factory by Mike's father, Stan, who was then Ducati's UK distributor, Hailwood's Écurie Sportive team installed a taller fuel tank and thickly padded seat, and he immediately won nine 125 races to claim the title. Bonhams expects it to fetch between $A175-220k.

DAVO FIRST OFF THE LINE

Aussie TT racer David "Davo" Johnson will lead the Isle of Man TT field away in starting position one. Fellow Aussie Josh Brookes starts number seven.

ZERO HOUR?

The establishment of a Philippines production facility means US electric brand Zero is poised to re-enter the Australian market.

HOT & NOT

AMCN'S THERMOMETER

PARIS BACKDOWN

After pioneering the use of rental e-scooters, French capital Paris looks set to ban them over traffic safety concerns.

CLAMP DOWN

A production error saw us enter the wrong stats for the Suzuki in last issue's nakedbike test. Obviously it is a 999cc inline four and not a 754cc twin.

REVVED-UP REEVES

When not shooting films, motorcycle-mad Keanu Reeves is continuing to develop his Arch motorcycle company in California. Recently he showed Ducati MotoGP team boss Paolo Ciabatti around the factory. Late last year Reeves spent a full two days riding around the Jerez circuit in Spain. If Reeves has to go on location to film he's been known to buy a motorcycle locally and sell it after the shoot concludes.

CUT SNAKE!

This crazy twin-turbo Beemer has just sold for $A35k on US site bringatrailer. California custom shop Boxer Metal created this monster from a 1980 BMW R 100 and it won second place in class at the 2016 Quail Motorcycle Gathering. It features twin T3/T4 turbos, two wastegates and blowoff valves, a MegaSquirt MicroSquirt system and electronic fuel injection. Just the thing for a quick spin on a Sunday morning!

MENTAL TWISTIES

The winner of the neck sock this time around is Simon Clarke from Goulburn, NSW. Top job!

1. Logo flipped
2. Fox logo flipped
3. Man gone
4. Lost arms
5. New sunnies

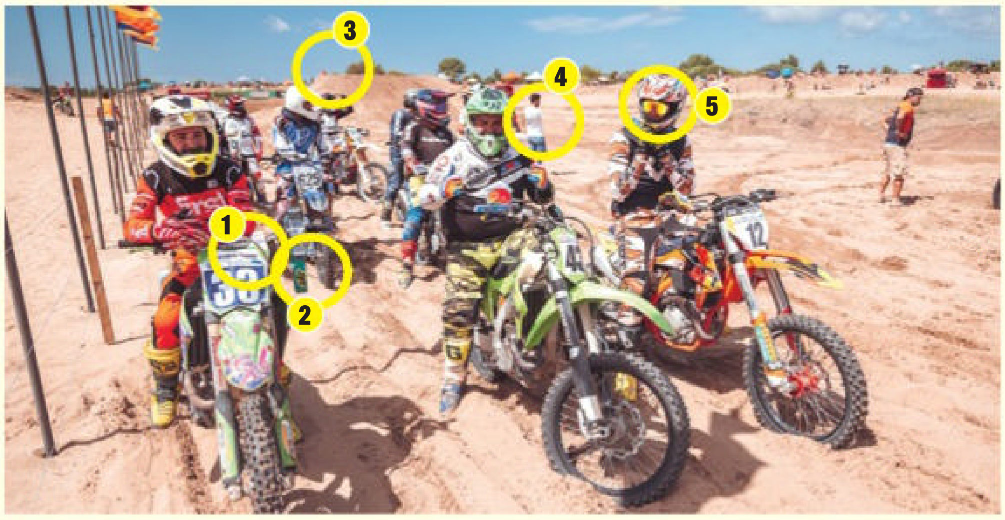


Photo: P. Platzer
READY TO RACE
THE BEAST, EVOLVED.
KTM

The KTM 1290 SUPER DUKE R EVO is a BEAST - evolved. Boasting intuitive Semi-Active Suspension Technology (SAT), this BEAST not only adapts to the road surface but also to the rider's inputs - making it a cold, calculated hunter. A frightening prospect for any would-be challenger.

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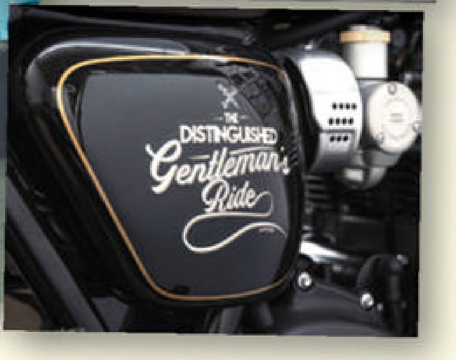
Please make no attempt to imitate the illustrated riding scenes, always wear protective clothing and observe the applicable provisions of the road traffic regulations! The illustrated vehicles may vary in selected details from the production models and some illustrations feature optional equipment available at additional cost.

The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride
22nd of May 2022
Worldwide
Triumph
Movember
Tiffan



TRIUMPH RELEASES DGR SPECIAL

With one up for grabs for highest fundraiser!

Triumph is celebrating a 10-year collaboration with the worldwide Distinguished Gentleman's Ride by offering 250 exclusive Bonneville T120 Black DGR Limited-Edition motorcycles.

The model underlines Triumph's commitment to the charity run founded in Sydney by Mark Hawwa in 2012 with Triumph coming on board two years later. Up to now, Triumph has offered one-of-a-kind twins to the top fundraiser, but has gone one step further with a fully branded DGR derivative of the 'high torque' 1200cc Bonneville Black. The metallic black and white paint scheme is a nod to the DGR rider style of 'dapper dressing' in pinstriped suits or dinner jackets.

Official DGR branding includes a custom logo on the tank and side panels, gold detailing and distinctive brown seat. Each of the 120 examples comes with a numbered certificate, signed by Hawwa and Triumph CEO Nick Bloor. Edition 001 will be presented to the highest fundraiser for the 2023 ride, which will be held on 21 May.

Hawwa was on hand for the official UK launch and actually rode number 001 around London.

"If anyone had said 10 years ago that we'd be celebrating a decade of partnership with Triumph Motorcycles, I would have laughed," he said. "That first year of signing has always been a highlight for me. It felt exciting, and that excitement still carries on every year."

Available Down Under in September and priced at $23,750 (ride away), customers will need to register their interest by submitting their name, contact details and residential postcode to specialeditions@triumphmotorcycles.com.au.

The DGR has raised more than $55m since its inception, with the funds going to prostate cancer research and a plethora of men's mental health programs.

HAMISH COOPER

RECALL ROSTER Check if your motorcycle is affected by these recent recalls

MODEL 2022-2023 Triumph T120 and T120 Black
IMPORTER PS Importers
NUMBER OF AFFECTED MOTORCYCLES 129
ISSUE Due to a manufacturing defect, the front brake disc may have been fitted incorrectly and could detach from the front wheel assembly. This is very likely to reduce the machine's expected braking performance.
POTENTIAL HAZARD Increased risk of an accident.

MODEL 2021-2022 Kawasaki KLR650/KLR650 Adventure
IMPORTER Kawasaki Motors
NUMBER OF AFFECTED MOTORCYCLES 460
ISSUE. Under certain conditions, if the engine stalls the defective fuel pump may cause the engine to not start/restart from stationary.
POTENTIAL HAZARD The rider may experience a reduction in expected performance and/or loss of vehicle power while riding.

MODEL 2020-2022 BMW S 1000 R and S 1000 XR
IMPORTER BMW Australia
NUMBER OF AFFECTED MOTORCYCLES 151
ISSUE Due to a software issue during a past update, the front wheel lift detection component of the Dynamic Pro mode has been reset to zero. As a result there may not be any assistance on front wheel lift detection (wheelie control).
POTENTIAL HAZARD Increased risk of an accident.

MODEL 2019-2023 Can-Am Spyder RT MY 2020-2021; certain Spyder RT MY 2022-2023 and Ryker 2022-2023
IMPORTER BRP Australia
NUMBER OF AFFECTED MOTORCYCLES 714
ISSUE The brake light may remain illuminated when the brake pedal is released and traffic behind the vehicle will be unable to identify if the motorcycle is actually braking.
POTENTIAL HAZARD Increased risk of an accident.

MODEL 2020-2021 Yamaha (Tricity)
IMPORTER Yamaha Australia
NUMBER OF AFFECTED MOTORCYCLES 52
ISSUE The 'Stand Assist' system which keeps the bike upright when stopped may not release immediately after deactivation as intended. This may prevent the rider from steering, resulting in a loss of vehicle control.
POTENTIAL HAZARD Increased risk of an accident.

ducati.com

Developed with Shell Advance

Technical partner Pirelli

New Ducati Diavel V4

Dare to be Bold

Muscle-cruiser with supersport personality

Muscular, powerful and elegant at the same time – the Diavel V4 is able to draw attention in any context. Blending seemingly distant technical, dynamic and stylistic features, such as those of sport nakeds and muscle cruisers, the exhilarating performance of the V4 Granturismo engine is combined with surprising agility and dynamics for this type of motorcycle.

New Diavel V4: Unmistakeable design. Unique personality.

Displacement 1,158 cc (71 cu in) | **Power** 168 hp (124 kW) @ 10,750 rpm | **Torque** 12.8 kgm (126 Nm, 93 lb ft) @ 7,500 rpm | **Dry weight** 211 kg (465 lb)

Discover the MY23 Ducati Range at ducati.com/au

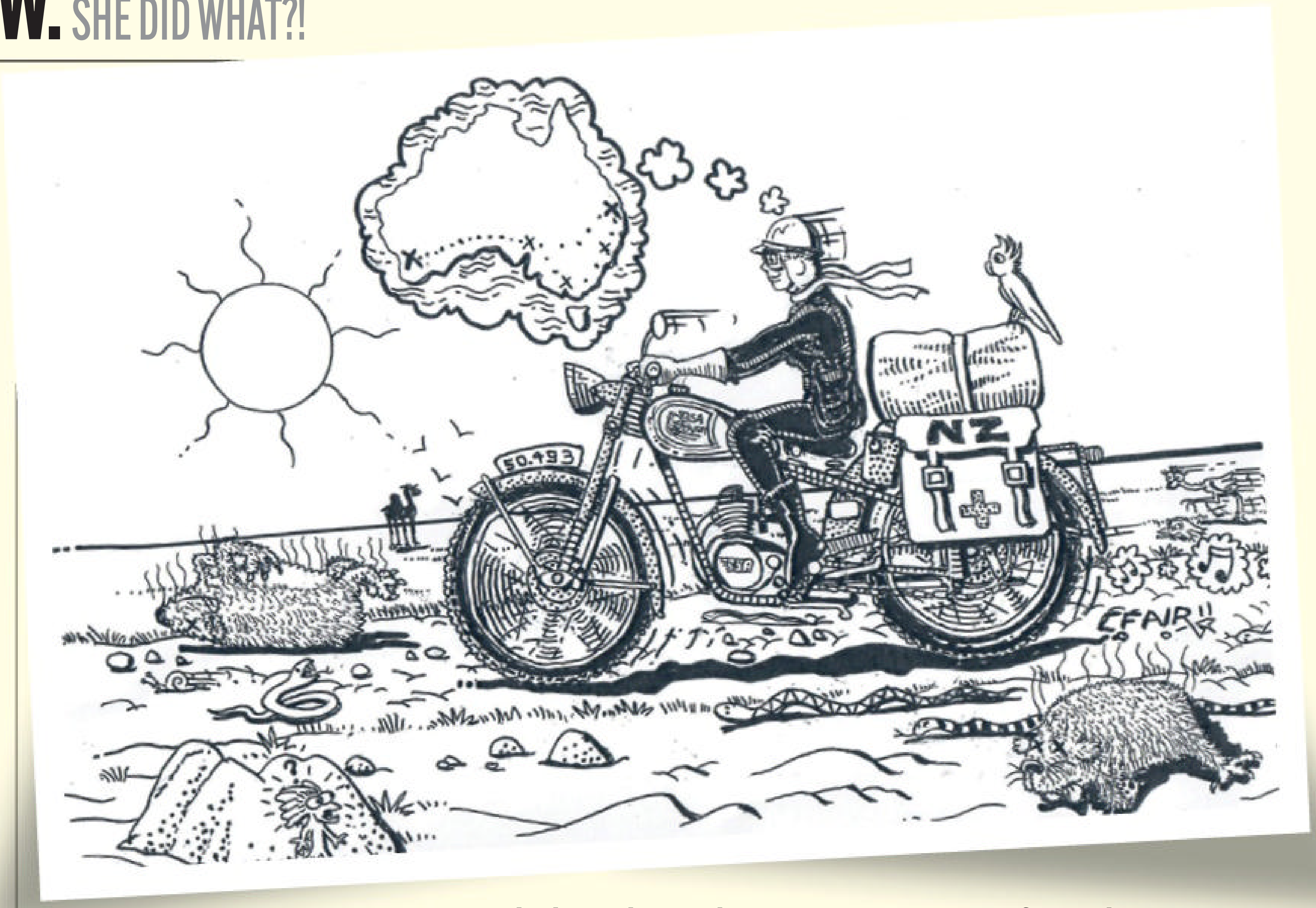
DUCATI

Overseas model is shown and specifications may vary for the local model. The model in this image may feature accessories and merchandise that are not supplied as standard. Always wear protective motorcycle clothing when riding and obey local road regulations. Do not attempt to recreate the riding scene depicted in this image. Contact your Authorised Ducati Dealer for more information.

WORDS **PETER WHITAKER** +
ILLUSTRATIONS **CRAIG FAIR**

JOY RIDE

Coast to Coast on little more than the smell of an oily rag



As a teenager, New Zealand-born Joy McKean sailed to the United Kingdom to train as a nurse in Edinburgh, and then suffered the misfortune of completing her internship in London during the Blitz.

Surviving in a bomb shelter all night and coping with the resulting trauma all day proved extremely harrowing so, on her short respites from the never-ending mayhem, Joy took to cycling; as far away from the devastation as possible. Over the war years she managed to cycle through most of the British Isles, including the Outer Hebrides Islands in Northern Scotland, which was about as far away from it all as it was possible to get a bicycle.

After the war, Joy managed a quick pedal around Ireland before sailing home to New Zealand for a much welcomed family reunion – immediately followed by a circuit of both islands to familiarise herself with her country of birth. By April 1950, Joy was nursing in the Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital. It appears this posting was merely a short pit stop, as in November of that year she was being interviewed in Huonville, Tasmania after cycling up the mainland coast from Brisbane to Mossman, south-west through Charters Towers, Charleville, Longreach and Mount Isa, then south to Melbourne. In Huonville, she informed the astounded reporter that she intended to tackle the desolate west coast of Tasmania where few roads even existed.

Joy survived the year-long odyssey, returning to Brisbane to resume her nursing career, enjoy the Christmas festivities and the 1951 New Year's Eve celebrations. However, the joyride would continue when her brother proved very persuasive about the merits of the new BSA Bantam 125cc with plunger rear suspension. Just three days after obtaining her motorcycle licence, Joy threw her saddlebags over her new Bantam and headed west. Her destination: Perth, the most isolated city on the planet.

Typically, she had no intention of following the established, more frequently travelled roads, instead riding west through Goondiwindi, Bourke, Broken Hill and Port Augusta before tackling the desolate track across the Nullarbor Plain.

It's not difficult to imagine the surprise on the face of the service manager of Mortlock Brothers – the West Australian BSA agent – when Joy booked in for the Bantam's first service with over 3000 miles (4828km) on the clock; reporting the only problem being an oiled plug. Joy wasn't the first female to tackle the Nullarbor – that honour went to West Australian Winifred Wells only 12 months earlier – though Joy's audacity on a 125cc two-stroke machine is remarkable.

Over in the west, Joy took in the great Karri forests on a ride down to Cape Leeuwin then tackled the rough sand and gibber track north to Carnarvon. After a short respite in Perth she headed back to Brisbane. On her return journey, she followed the coast, celebrating with several days layover in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Undoubtedly Joy was entertained by enthusiastic BSA agents on these occasions, and this must have undoubtedly been a welcome respite from overnighting in the vestibule of the local church, sleeping beside the track, and existing on fruit, nuts and raw veggies.

Reporting no 'spills' along the way, Joy divulged that she never stretched the Bantam any faster than her fastest cycling pace of 30mph (48km/h), a safe pace which resulted in superlative fuel economy – 190mpg (1.2L/100km) for the 5000-mile (8046km) return journey. Amazing, but no less so than the newspaper advertising for the Royal Enfield Flying Flea which featured the local Vicar affirming 200mpg (1.1L/100km)! What was more amazing was Joy's perseverance in suffering days of up to nine hours in the saddle, particularly bearing in mind the rear of the little Bantam may have been crudely sprung, but the front forks not.

Though Joy reported sighting a huge number of snakes (none of which could exceed 30mph) and large dead wombats (none of which were killed by the diminutive Bantam), other wildlife stayed clear. As did the rain. The only rain Joy experienced in the entire 10-week adventure was crossing the NSW-Queensland border when a light mid-December sun shower lasted all of 30 minutes. Nothing to dampen the celebrations, or the publicity, on her triumphant return to Brisbane.

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WINNER
LETTER OF THE ISSUE

Motomuck

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ACCESS.

AIR YOUR THOUGHTS OR VENT YOUR SPLEEN

Access, AMCN, PO Box 6, Bittern, Vic, 3918
access@amcn.com.au

LETTER OF THE ISSUE

A Himi-high!

Ever since I started motorcycling in the early 1970s I've been an avid reader of AMCN. I've recently returned from a bike ride in Leh, Ladakh – fancy being able to ride a Royal Enfield Himalayan around the foothills of the Himalayan mountain range?!

My tour was 12 days in the Zanskar Valley – what an exhilarating experience. Like any good motorcycling Aussie, Khardung-La was on my bucket list. The highest road in the world, the altitude is over 5400m.

I hired a Himalayan for the day, they gave me a bit of a rat bike; no papers, no number plate, etc, but it was a perfect day for riding and the road is sealed all the way to the top of the pass. It is only 50km from Leh and such a pretty ride – the whole of the top of the pass is festooned with prayer flags. I staggered up the steps to the chortens at the top.

While I gathered my breath it was also taken away by the lack of oxygen, but also by the views!

My tour followed the Indus River downstream towards Kashmir for two days, before heading south to follow the Suru River upstream for another two. Elevation was increasing and we were riding up and over passes almost as high as Khardung-La. From here we did an about-turn and headed back down the very treacherous unsealed road of hairpin bends. It just didn't seem that treacherous on the way up – it seemed every hairpin was a sandpit!

You've got to love these bikes, they're virtually unstoppable. The Indian version of our postie bikes. Certainly around Leh – the adventure çapital of Ladakh – the Himalayans are ubiquitous. All the motorcycle tour companies use them, and barely an old Bullet in sight.

We crossed six passes that were higher than 4000m, my lungs certainly felt the lack of oxygen but these unstoppable Himalayans just kept on going. They are also a very capable bike when it comes to creek and river crossings.

The 19-inch front wheel rolls over most of the submerged river rocks and only on two occasions did the bikes need to have their sodden air filters replaced.

I am a Himalayan nutter – I love my own Himi and I loved riding around Zanskar Valley on a more recent model – mine has carbies and a choke! – with a dozen other happy Indian motorcyclists.

Annie Dupleix
via email

> YOU'VE GOT TO LOVE THESE BIKES, THEY'RE VIRTUALLY UNSTOPPABLE

After travelling to the Himalayas myself on a Himalayan last year (AMCN Vol 72 No 08) I can totally relate to your feelings of awe and admiration, both for the overwhelming scale of the incredible landscape and the impressive capability of the diminutive bike. The Himalayas is a certainly a bucket-list destination and the Royal Enfield Himalayan is the ideal bike to do it on. I travelled with Moto Himalaya, and I have nothing but praise for the company's itinerary, organisational skills, medical and mechanical support and affordable pricing. I strongly recommend this journey to any motorcyclist with a sense of adventure. Deano

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We're not sure Greg would condone Igor Akrapovic's behaviour... but each to their own

Bailed up

Mr Gleason (*Access*, AMCN Vol 72 No 18) is spot on about the problem underlying socialised systems – that is, the moral hazard that arises when people aren't held responsible for their actions. From cigarette smokers to unprofitable car makers, it's taxpayer bailouts galore.

Better to go the capital-L Libertarian route and have people pay for their own lifestyle choices, be it smoking, motorcycling, having kids or investing in failing companies. It'd give the fun police a lot less leverage over just how we live our lives.

Duncan Bayne
via email

Bailed out

Deano, using Greg Gleason's logic on road safety (AMCN Vol 72 No 18), motorcycles and bicycles should be banned outright due to rider vulnerability and the cost to the public hospital system.

Case in point. Pol Espargaro, wearing all the best safety gear available in 2023 was still badly injured at the Portuguese MotoGP. So the simplest solution is to ban bikes and everyone use cars or public transport – problem instantly solved.

Then the Gregs of the world can concentrate on making sure all pedestrians wear hi-vis safety gear and get fitted with lights when walking at night.

Gavin Breese
Marino, SA

Or just ban walking at night. Deano

No voice

Note to Hamish Cooper (and to Ed, too) I'd suggest you're setting a dangerous precedent with the content of your last column (*Old School*, AMCN Vol 72 No 18).

What's already become a divisive and contentious topic has no place in this publication. I don't care what your orientation is, nor should you be influencing a sway either way and throwing guilt to do so. Stick with what you know best: motorcycling.

Simon Trnovsky
via email

I disagree Simon. Hamish hasn't advocated that you vote one way or another; he has simply provided a perspective based on his travels throughout NZ's back country and Australia's outback, and how these travels may have influenced his own way of thinking. Deano

MAKING SURE ALL PEDESTRIANS WEAR HI-VIS SAFETY GEAR AND LIGHTS

Naked dismay

Great magazine, guys. I am a long-term reader, however I was a little disappointed with the nakedbike comparison (AMCM Vol 72 No 19).

You did a supernaked comparison back in 2020 (AMCN Vol 70 No 05) and you backed it up with hard data. The bikes were weighed, dynoed and raced – you did none of that this time.

For example, the Z H2 makes less power at the wheel than the Super Duke in your 2020 comparo, despite manufacture claims.

If you're going to do a comparison, wait until you have the proper bikes. I have a 2020 KTM Super Duke R and I previously owned a 2014 BMW S 1000 R, so I would like to see an apples-to-apples comparison. I bought my Super Duke based on your 2020 comparison.

You could have waited for the BMW M 1000 R and ditched the Suzuki and Ducati Streetfighter V2 – I am sure you can source a Ducati V4 S. I am sure a lot of readers would rather see a hypernaked shootout backed up by comprehensive testing. You basically did a ride with mates and asked for everyone's opinion.

I still enjoyed reading the comparison and believe you have the best motorcycle magazine in Australia.

Rob Hanson
Richmond, Qld

Thanks for the feedback Rob. In our defense, we didn't claim that the 2023 nakedbike shootout was anything but a real-world road test. Fortunately, it was conducted on some of the best (and worst) roads on offer, giving us ample opportunity to form and express opinions on each bike. If we had waited for the arrival of the new M 1000 R, and then the 2023 Streetfighter V4 S, and then the next new/revised nakedbike

AGO'S POOL ROOM
AUSTRALIAN MOTOR CYCLE NEWS
NUTS!
STRIP SHOW
NAKEDBIKE Sorted!
Head to head on road and track
TELEMETRY TOO!
$250K vs $2.5M

Mr Cool: Marco Bezzechi

> DO YOU RECKON HE SWAPPED THE NUMBERS ON HIS AND FABIO'S BIKES, COS FABIO WAS NOWHERE!

due to land soon, we would never get around to comparing bikes. Oh, and it would have been criminal to ditch the Suzuki GSX-S1000; it is a ripper bike that held its head high against much pricier bikes. Despite any perceived shortcomings with the shootout, I am glad hear you still enjoyed reading it. Deano

Track learning

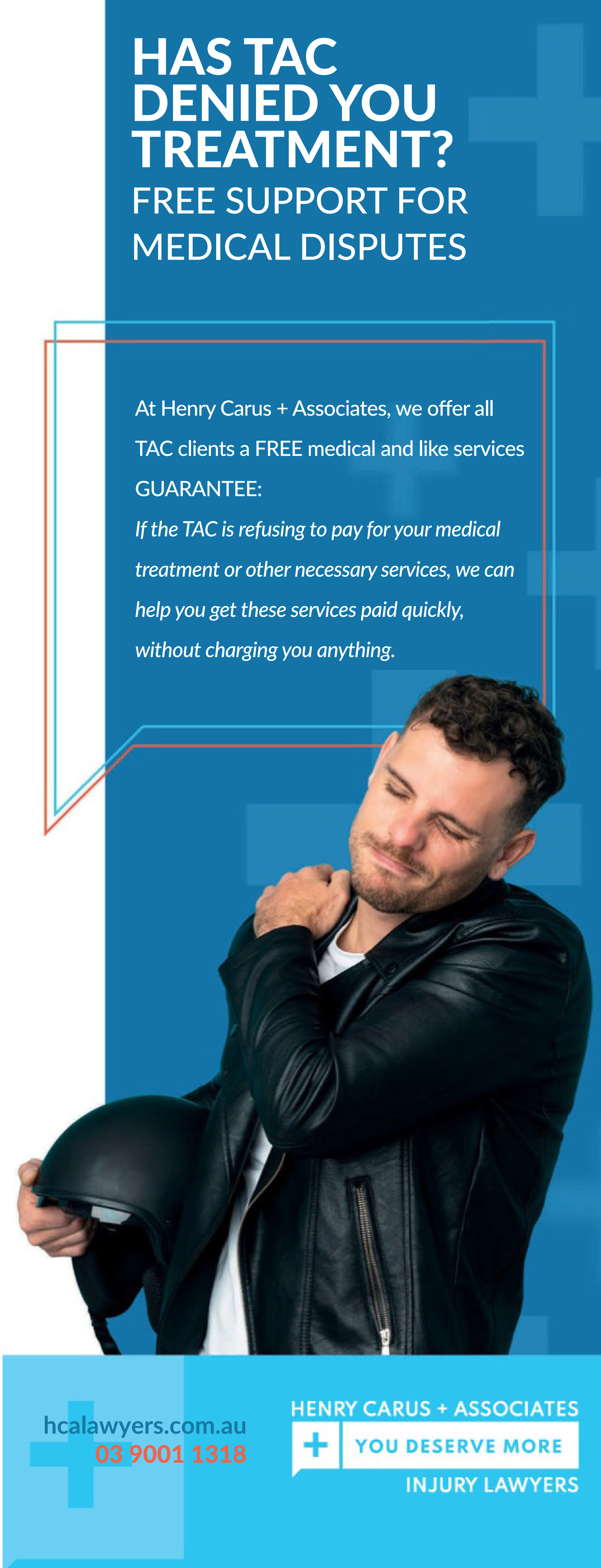
Guys! So happy that MotoGP's back on, though my wife's not particularly happy about the extra race I have to watch! But I reckon even she'd see that the sprint, as controversial as it seems to be, is bloody entertaining.

Two rounds down and what have we learnt? Well, I've learnt that Ducati will win the constructors' title in 2023 – actually, scrap that. We already knew that'd happen. I've learnt that Morbidelli hasn't actually forgotten how to ride a motorbike. He was so great to watch in Argentina, so good to see him back towards the front, but do you reckon he swapped the numbers on his and Fabio's bikes, cos Fabio was nowhere! It'll be interesting to see how that plays out.

I learnt that if luck's on his side, that Alex Marquez is a dark horse for the championship. He's really clever and talented and his confidence is growing every day he's on the bike, so I reckon he'll just get stronger and stronger as the season progresses and as he gels with his new team.

And I'm also beginning to think Raul Fernandez may not have the, I don't know what the word would be – maybe the killer instinct required to take these 250hp MotoGP monsters to the last few percent of their limit required to get yourself anywhere near the upper end of the timesheet. I have no doubt that he could still wipe the floor clean in Moto2, but maybe the big boys aren't for him. Oh, and I've learnt that Marco Bezzechi is one cool little dude.

Josh Shoemark
via email



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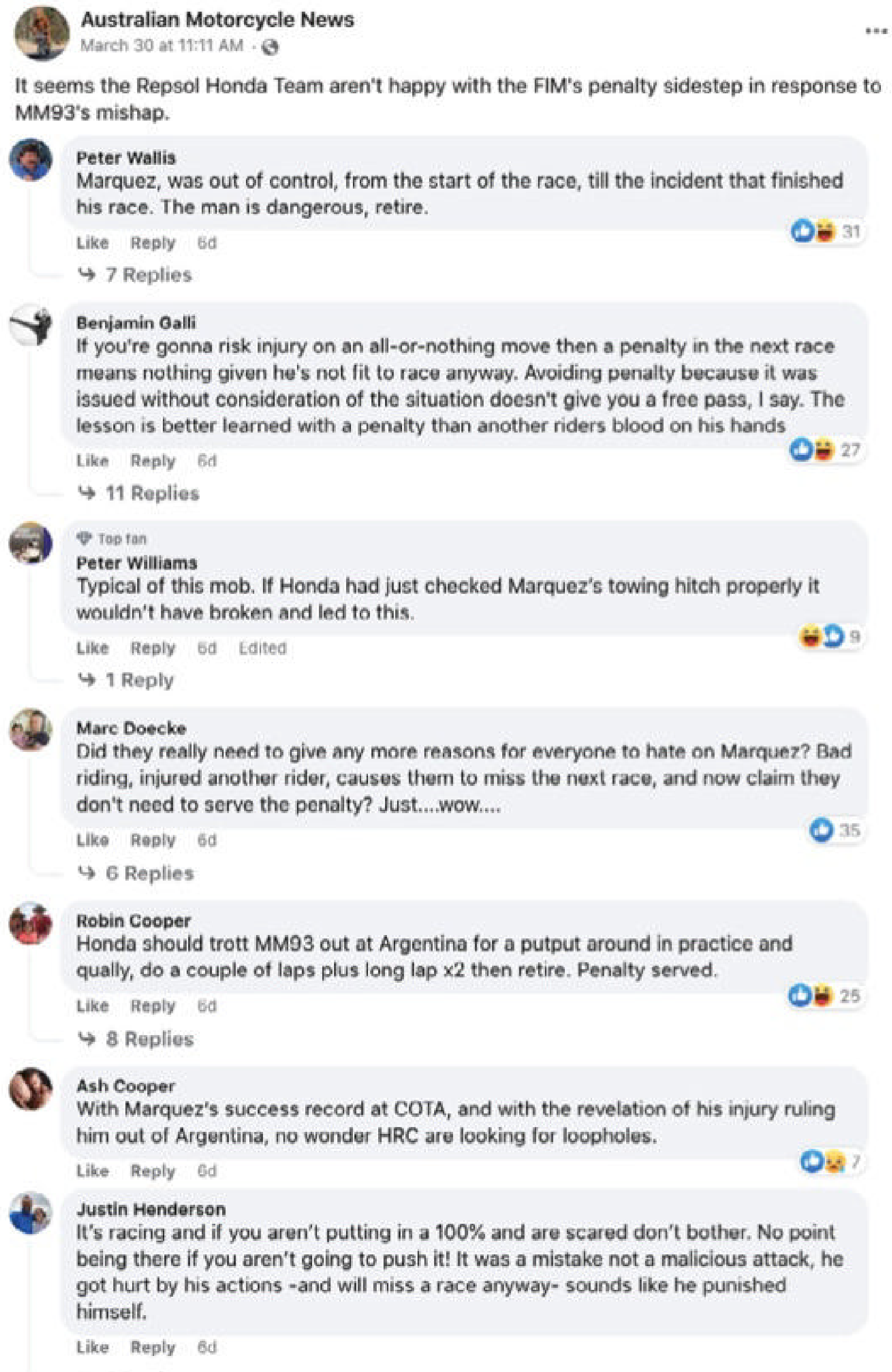
Post of the issue



Australian Motorcycle News
March 30 at 11:11 AM ·

It seems the Repsol Honda Team aren't happy with the FIM's penalty sidestep in response to MM93's mishap.

Peter Wallis
Marquez, was out of control, from the start of the race, till the incident that finished his race. The man is dangerous, retire.
31
Like Reply 6d
7 Replies

Benjamin Galli
If you're gonna risk injury on an all-or-nothing move then a penalty in the next race means nothing given he's not fit to race anyway. Avoiding penalty because it was issued without consideration of the situation doesn't give you a free pass, I say. The lesson is better learned with a penalty than another riders blood on his hands
27
Like Reply 6d
11 Replies

Top fan
Peter Williams
Typical of this mob. If Honda had just checked Marquez's towing hitch properly it wouldn't have broken and led to this.
9
Like Reply 6d Edited
1 Reply

Marc Doecke
Did they really need to give any more reasons for everyone to hate on Marquez? Bad riding, injured another rider, causes them to miss the next race, and now claim they don't need to serve the penalty? Just....wow....
35
Like Reply 6d
6 Replies

Robin Cooper
Honda should trott MM93 out at Argentina for a putput around in practice and qualy, do a couple of laps plus long lap x2 then retire. Penalty served.
25
Like Reply 6d
8 Replies

Ash Cooper
With Marquez's success record at COTA, and with the revelation of his injury ruling him out of Argentina, no wonder HRC are looking for loopholes.
7
Like Reply 6d

Justin Henderson
It's racing and if you aren't putting in a 100% and are scared don't bother. No point being there if you aren't going to push it! It was a mistake not a malicious attack, he got hurt by his actions -and will miss a race anyway- sounds like he punished himself.
Like Reply 6d

INSTAGRAM

@motorzao_fucado
@hiropapa12
HONDA

Don't Forget #amcn_mag

Comment of the Issue

Brendan Sheehan has thrown a deserved bouquet at Savic for its all-new electric bike.

"Congratulations to Savic for designing, constructing and getting it past ADRs in Australia"

Reaching out

Want to see your pride and joy featured in AMCN?

The only thing we love more than writing about bikes is looking at your bikes. Tag your social pics with **@aumotorcyclenews** on Facebook or **@amcn_mag** on Instagram, or fire them off in an email to **amcn@amcn.com.au** And don't forget to tell us why you love it.

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Let the Good Times Roll

FOR AUSSIE CONDITIONS
BUILT TOUGH
FOR AUSSIE CONDITIONS
STOCKMAN

Lime Green
Olive Green

STOCKMAN

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SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Just sit back, relax, and enjoy the read: Yamaha's master stuntman Dave McKenna hams it up. Spot the five changes made to this image, email us your answers and you may win an AMCN neck sock!

WIN!

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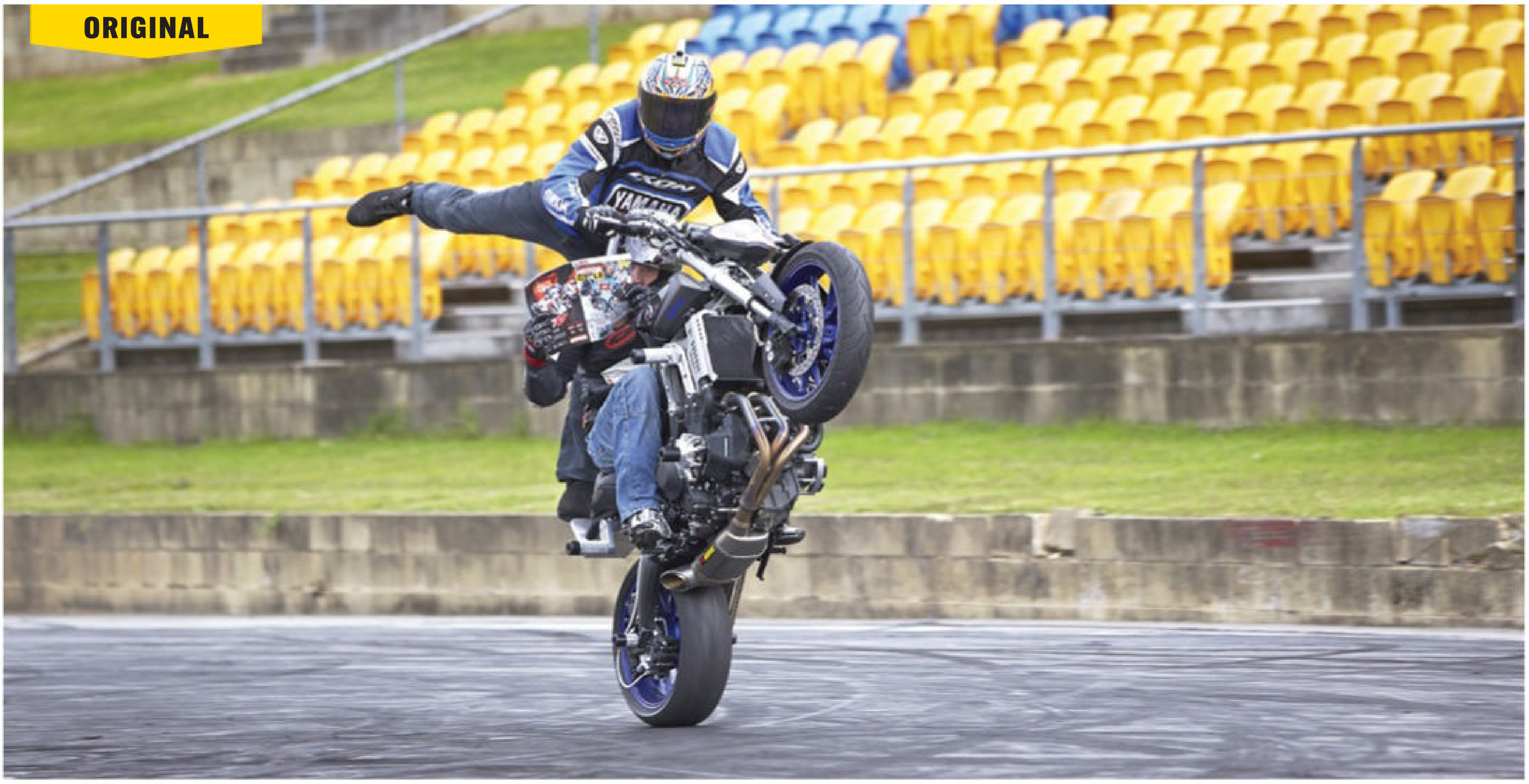
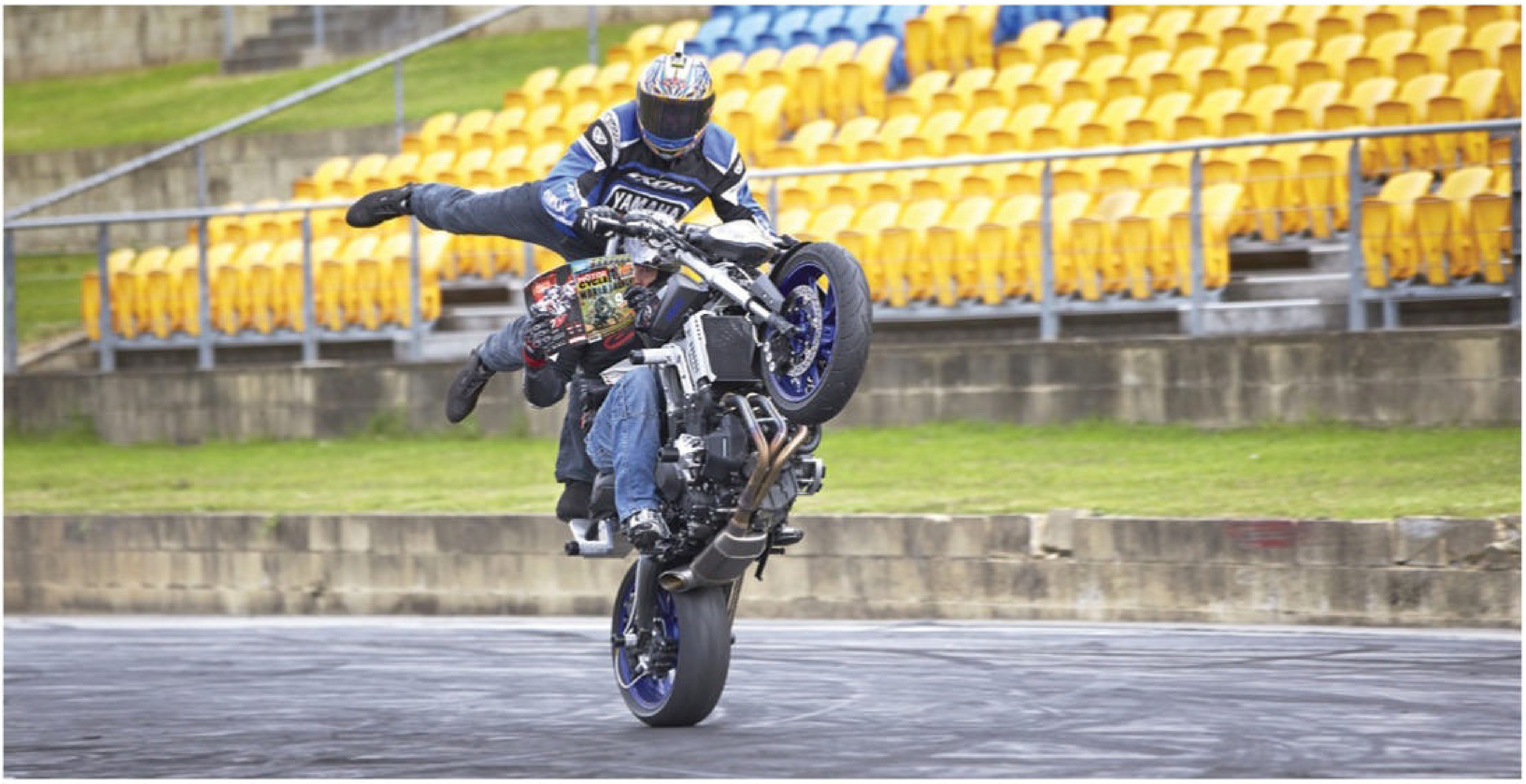
EMAIL YOUR ANSWERS AND ADDRESS TO AMCN@AMCN.COM.AU FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!

ORIGINAL





ANSWERS WILL BE REVEALED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

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WORDS **PETE VORST**

BOLOGNA BRAWL

Ducati released its DesertX in 2022 and now it's gone and released another adventure machine for 2023

DUCATI DESERTX

FULL TEST: AMCN VOL 72 NO 11

V

DUCATI MULTISTRADA V4 RALLY

FULL TEST: NEXT ISSUE!

BACKGROUND

First shown as a concept back in 2019 with Ducati finally releasing the production version of the DesertX in 2022. Arguably Ducati's first adventure bike with off-road pretensions, the DesertX has long-travel suspension, decent ground clearance and a slim waistline. The DesertX gives more than a nod to the Lucky Strike Dakar bikes of the 1980s and, after testing Ducati's adventure rig, we crowned it AMCN Motorcycle of the Year in 2022.

The V4 Multistrada was released in 2021 and was a big leap forward in performance and reliability from the Multistrada V2 1260 it replaced. The Rally joins the V4, V4 S, and V4 Pikes Peak in Ducati's Multistrada V4 family and offers punters a more off-road focused adventure touring machine that features a larger tank, improved rider and pillion comfort, more suspension travel and extended cylinder deactivation that improves thermal management.

NUTS AND BOLTS

Housed in a steel trellis frame, the 937cc boasts 81kW (110hp) of power at 9250rpm and 92Nm of torque at 6500rpm. The donk has gone on a diet and weighs 1.7kg less than the previous generation Testastretta. The DesertX sports a full crop of electronics, a 21-litre tank and, importantly, KYB suspension that provides 230mm (front) and 220mm (rear) of travel. However, the addition of a 21-inch front wheel is arguably the biggest change - a first for Ducati. Braking is handled by dual 320mm discs on the front squeezed by Brembo radial monobloc calipers, and a 265mm disc with a twin-piston Brembo on the rear.

The Rally's V4 punches out the same 125kW (170hp) and 121Nm power and torque as the rest of the Multistrada V4 family, although the cylinder deactivation feature has been expanded to improve heat management and fuel economy. The rally sports a 30-litre tank and 200mm of travel at both ends from its semi-active electronic suspension - an improvement of 30mm (front) and 20mm (rear) over the standard Multi. The Rally rolls on spoked wheels, with stopping power provided by Brembo calipers and 330mm twin front and single 265mm discs. The penalty for the extra kit is a 20kg increase in claimed kerb weight over the standard Multistrada V4.

ONES AND ZEROS

The desert lacks the high level of electronics of the Rally, but it's still loaded with plenty of tech. There are six ride modes (Sport, Touring, Urban, Wet, Enduro and Rally), four power modes, wheelie control, engine brake control, cruise control, a bi-directional quickshifter, switchable traction control, and switchable cornering ABS with three levels of intervention. All the bike's information is broadcast to the rider via a five-inch TFT display in portrait mode. Other nice touches include full LED lighting and 12v and USB sockets.

The Rally, like other Multistradas, is a rolling example of high-end tech. It has front and rear radar that supports adaptive cruise control and blind spot detection. As well as the usual ride mode options available across the Multi family, the Rally has a dedicated off-road mode. It also features cornering ABS and traction control, wheelie control, hill hold, an adaptive LED headlight and bi-directional quickshifter, while the Skyhook electronic suspension now has a lowering feature. There's a large 6.5-inch full colour TFT display with Bluetooth connectivity and navigation.

SPECS

Ducati DesertX	MODEL	Ducati Multistrada V4 Rally
938cc Testastretta V-twin	ENGINE	1158cc Granturismo V4
81kW (110hp) at 9250rpm	POWER	125kW (170hp) @ 10,750rpm
92Nm @ 6500rpm	TORQUE	121Nm @ 8750rpm
223kg (kerb, claimed)	WEIGHT	260kg (kerb, claimed)
875mm	SEAT HEIGHT	870 - 890mm
21L	FUEL CAPACITY	30L
Now	AVAILABILITY	Mid 2023
From $26,400	PRICE	From $41,400

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TEST **DEAN MELLOR** + PHOTOGRAPHY **INCITE IMAGES**

TINY TEARAWAY

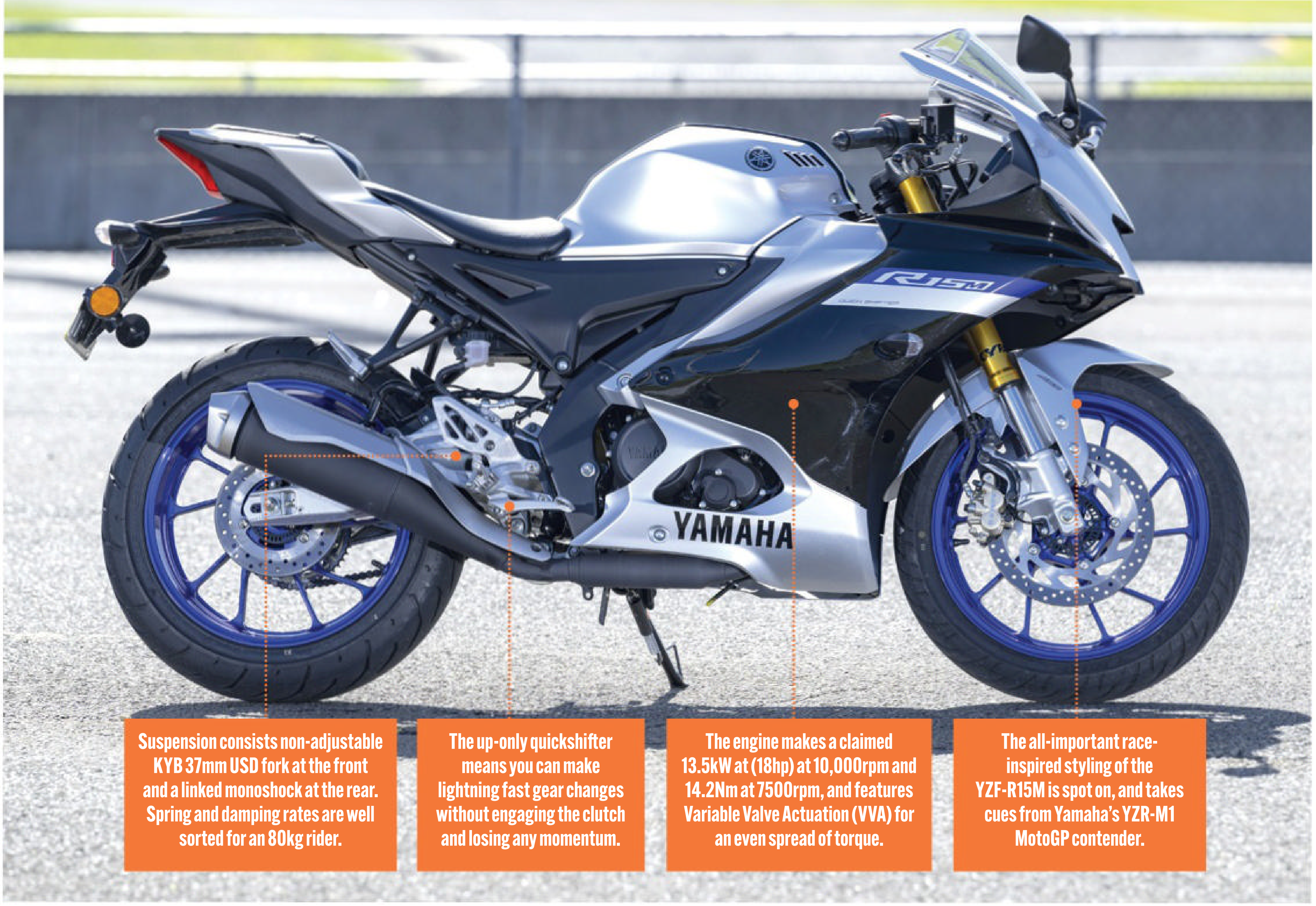
The updated Yamaha YZF-R15M is packed with features not normally seen on a bike this small including traction control and a quickshifter… but is it any good?

The last time I rode a Yamaha YZF-R15 I was ripping around Sydney Motorsport Park like a teenager, slipstreaming, ducking and weaving while trying to pass an equally 'old' bloke on another R15. I could hardly see for the tears in my eyes I was laughing that hard. What a blast!

Yamaha has recently seen fit to upgrade the smallest model in its supersport range, and in doing so has created an even more fun tiny tearaway. And while the model designation now sports an M indicating it's a top-tiered item, there's still only one version on offer for 2023 and this is it. Sure, the R15M's little 155cc water-cooled single only musters a claimed 13.5kW (18hp) at 10,000rpm and 14.2Nm at 7500rpm, but if you keep it on the boil and stay clear of the brakes before throwing it into a corner you won't believe what you can get away with.

At 140kg wet, the R15M is so light and nimble

1. It's quite the crouch to get behind the tiny cockpit!
2. The muffler cover and end-cap make for a tidy rear
3. The monoshock offers 90mm of suspension travel
4. Revised styling, particularly at the front, has hit the spot
5. Functional instrumentation: nothing more, nothing less



Suspension consists non-adjustable KYB 37mm USD fork at the front and a linked monoshock at the rear. Spring and damping rates are well sorted for an 80kg rider.

The up-only quickshifter means you can make lightning fast gear changes without engaging the clutch and losing any momentum.

The engine makes a claimed 13.5kW at (18hp) at 10,000rpm and 14.2Nm at 7500rpm, and features Variable Valve Actuation (VVA) for an even spread of torque.

The all-important race-inspired styling of the YZF-R15M is spot on, and takes cues from Yamaha's YZR-M1 MotoGP contender.

that throwing it from side to side is, appropriately, child's play... and it's backed up by well-sorted suspension with a new upside-down fork, an upshift-only quickshifter, a decent braking package and, believe it or not, a traction control system (TCS).

For 2023 the R15M's engine also gets Variable Valve Actuation (VVA), but I'll get to that in a bit because in this market segment one of the most important aspects is how a bike looks. The revised styling has a race-inspired look that takes cues straight from Fabio Quartararo's MotoGP machine, with a YZR-M1-style air intake in the nose – housing a discreet LED headlight – and a bubble-screen that's easy it to tuck in behind – vitally important when you have fewer than 20hp to play with.

The front-end features LED positioning lights that are aimed at giving the R15M a big-bike look, the area around the headstock has a trick slotted top triple clamp and blue anodised fork caps,

SO LIGHT AND NIMBLE THAT THROWING IT FROM SIDE TO SIDE IS CHILD'S PLAY...

ONCE YOU SIT UP WIND RESISTANCE CAN WASH OFF 10-20 CLICKS IN A HEARTBEAT

while the rear bodywork features bang-up-to-date air ducts reminiscent of a Ducati Panigale or a Triumph Street Triple.

While it doesn't score the colourful TFT display that's available in some other markets, the small-ish LCD screen offered in Australia shows a wealth of info and is easy enough to read, and the switchgear is simple and easy to master. Important information such as speed, engine revs, gear position and fuel level are always visible, and you can scroll through other important details like trips and fuel consumption via a button on the right-side switchblock.

Small finishing touches like the chrome badges on the fuel tank and the embroidered 'R15M' on the pillion seat add a touch of class to a bike that is just $6299 ride away. The swingarm looks trick with the chain running through it, and the muffler cover and endcap cleverly disguise what is a basic, black-painted mild-steel exhaust system. The paint finish on the tank and fairing is top notch, too, our testbike supplied in the Icon Performance colour scheme. For those old enough to remember Yamaha's rich racing history, the R15M is also available in the 60th Anniversary WGP colour scheme, with red and white plastics, gold wheels and a yellow plate up front.

The VVA system features two inlet valve cams that switch over at 7400rpm, and this arrangement is aimed at maximising torque throughout the rev range. VVA makes the R15M feel more responsive low in the rev range than a 155cc engine has a right to and, considering its modest capacity, it pulls cleanly if a little lethargically from 5000rpm but is still happiest at or above the quoted 7500rpm torque peak.

Low gearing makes it easy to keep the engine on the boil, as does the one-way quickshifter – the first of its kind on a single-cylinder Yamaha roadbike. There are a series of shift lights across the top of the instrument binnacle, and in the lower gears these illuminate rapidly. The quickshifter is fantastic on a small-capacity bike like the R15M where you need to maintain momentum as you bang up through the ratios, and with throttle wide open there's enough acceleration on offer to keep most of the traffic in your mirrors... unless you miss a cog. The quickshifter is reluctant to shift on partial throttle and I hit neutral a couple of times when upshifting from first to second, but on full throttle this wasn't an issue.

While downshifts require you to pull in the clutch lever, the Assist and Slipper (A&S) clutch feels light and progressive, and it minimises the chance of rear-wheel lockup when downshifiting. Traction control seems like overkill on such a small bike. On the R15M it operates by adjusting the ignition timing and fuel volume if wheelspin is detected and, while I never once felt it engage, TCS would no doubt be a handy safety aid in slippery conditions and it's a good inclusion on a bike like

1. The chain running through the swingarm looks neat

2. The Icon Performance colour scheme, and there's also a Yamaha 60th Anniversary livery

3. Deano had a ball keeping the little single on the boil

4. There's adequate oomph from the twin-piston front caliper

5. The rear perch is serviceable, but certainly doesn't accomodate all sizes...

6. There's an up-only quickshifter working in concert with that lever

7. A trim and taut package, anyway you look at it

ON YOUR MARKS

The YZF-R15M has no direct supersport competitors but here are some alternatives for those with less than $6300 to spend.

CFMoto 300SR

Engine 292.4cc single
Power 21.4kW
Torque 25.3Nm
Weight 165kg wet
$6290 (ride away)

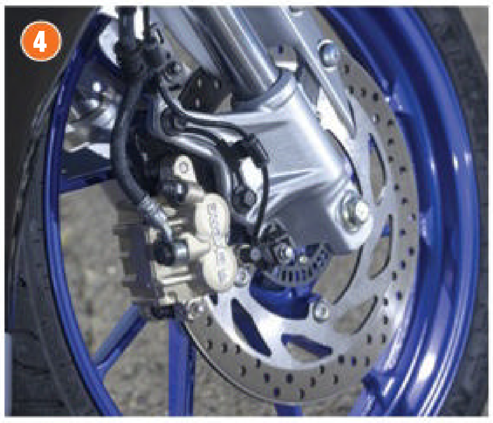
KTM 200 Duke

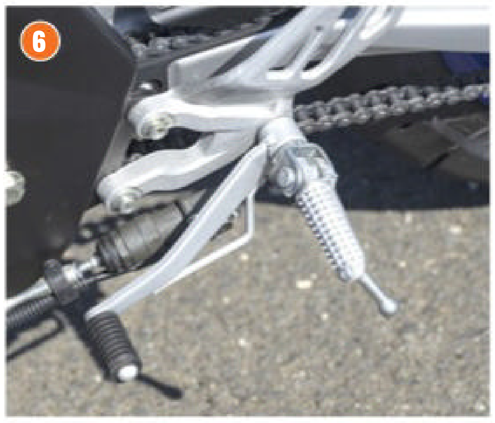
Engine 199.5cc single
Power 19kW
Torque 19.5Nm
Weight 150.3kg wet
$5470 (ride away)

Suzuki GSX-S125A

Engine 124cc single
Power 10.8kW
Torque 11.5Nm
Weight 133kg wet
$5440 (ride away)

③
R15M
YAMAHA





the R15M that is aimed at young novice riders. The TCS is said to be more active in Street ride mode than in Track, although I could hardly tell the difference and ran the bike in Track mode for the duration of the test.

The best I saw out of the R15M was an indicated 130 clicks in top gear, at which point most of the shift lights are lit up like a Chrissy tree. To maintain speeds above 110km/h you really need to get your chin down near the tank with arms tucked in, because once you sit up wind resistance can wash off 10-20 clicks in a heartbeat.

Despite being a small bike, the riding position offers reasonable space to stretch out. The R15M is so narrow you can easily hang off the side of it and, while the handlebar is quite low, it's only a short reach away so there isn't too much weight on your wrists… especially at highway speeds. The footpegs are up nice and high, so there's plenty of ground clearance when cranked over, but they are not positioned so high or far back that you'll feel cramped.

The non-adjustable suspension setup consists a 37mm USD fork with 130mm of travel and a

R15M
QUICK SHIFTER

SPECS

ENGINE

Capacity 155cc
Type Single-cylinder, SOHC, variable valve actuation, four valves
Bore & stroke 58mm x 58.7mm
Compression ratio 11.6:1
Cooling Liquid
Fueling EFI
Transmission Six-speed
Clutch Wet, multi-plate, assist slipper
Final drive Chain

PERFORMANCE

Power 13.5kW (18.4hp) @ 10,000rpm (claimed)
Torque 14.2Nm @ 7500rpm (claimed)
Top speed 135km/h (est)
Fuel consumption 2.5L/100km (measured)

ELECTRONICS

Type Yamaha
Rider aids ABS, traction control, up-only quickshifter
Rider modes Street and Track

CHASSIS

Frame material Deltabox alloy
Frame type Twin spar
Rake 25.5º
Trail 88mm
Wheelbase 1325mm

SUSPENSION

Type KYB
Front: 37mm upside-down fork, non-adjustable, 130mm travel
Rear: Monoshock, non-adjustable, 90mm travel

WHEELS & BRAKES

Wheels Cast alloy
Front: 17 x 2.5 Rear: 17 x 4.0
Tyres MRF REVZ-S
Front: 100/80-17 (52P)
Rear: 140/70R17 (66H)
Brakes Bybre, ABS
Front: 282mm disc, twin-piston caliper
Rear: Single 220mm disc, single-piston caliper

DIMENSIONS

Weight 140kg (wet, claimed)
Seat height 815mm
Width 725mm
Height 1135mm
Length 1990mm
Ground clearance 170mm
Fuel capacity 11L

SERVICING & WARRANTY

Servicing First: 1000km
Minor: 6000km
Major: 12,000km
Warranty Two years, unlimited kilometres

BUSINESS END

Price $6299 (ride away)
Colour options Icon Performance, 60th Anniversary WGP

CONTACT

www.yamaha-motor.com.au

linked monoshock with 90mm of travel. The spring and damping rates felt well suited to my 78kg, and ride quality was impressive for such a light bike, even over crappy surfaces.

A twin-disc setup would look better than the R15M's single 282mm disc, and it would offer better feel and stopping power, but there is certainly adequate braking performance on offer. There is no span adjustment for either the brake or clutch levers, so if they are not to your liking you'll have to source aftermarket replacements.

I didn't push the MRF REVZ-S rubber – a 100/80-17 up front and 140/70-17 at the rear – hard enough on the road to criticise it, and I didn't get the chance to test the R15M in the rain. The bike felt planted when cornering in the dry and stability when braking hard was faultless, while the ABS activation felt well sorted.

The R15M is compatible with Yamaha's Y-Connect app, which shows phone notifications, diagnostic info, parking location, fuel-consumption tracker and more. A cool feature for the kids is the live tacho that can be displayed on your phone, although it's a bit gimmicky and I can't see any real benefit to it.

The pillion seat looks big enough for young'uns to throw their other halves on the back, although passengers will be perched quite high. Securing luggage on the back seat could be problematic due to the fancy bodywork around it, so a tankbag or a backpack would be better options.

ON TEST THE R15M SIPPED THE GO-JUICE AT A TEETOTALLING 2.5L/100KM

The fuel tank is a tiny 11 litres but on test the R15M sipped the go-juice at a teetotalling 2.5L/100km, so you should get more than 400km out of a tank – and it'll only cost you 20 bucks or so to fill it up!

That'll please young blokes and blokettes just at the start of their motorcycling odysseys. In fact, there are a whole lot of things about the YZF-R15M that will please the target audience; it's affordable, it's fun and it looks great.

R15M
YAMAHA

Revised styling and engine tweaks have reinforced the Yammie's LAMS credentials – and it's still a hoot to ride!

PROS AND CONS

A lack of span adjustment on the levers is an oversight, and the up-only quickshifter can occasionally misfire.

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The GOOD DOCTOR

Much like the firm's iconic DR Big of the late 1980s, Suzuki has upped its off-road game with the all-new V-Strom 800DE

TEST **PETE VORST** + PHOTOGRAPHY **STEVE CAUDWELL**

Suzuki's updated V-Strom 1050DE (AMCN Vol 72 No 18) stands as an example of the brand's intention to breathe more off-road potential into the V-Strom range. In that regard, the 1050DE is certainly a step forward compared to the big-bore V-Stroms that came before it.

And now Suzuki has upped the ante even further with the introduction of its all-new V-Strom 800DE. Suzuki reckons the 800 is the most off-road ready V-Strom yet and, after stepping off the 1050DE a couple of weeks ago, and riding the 800DE machine in New Zealand recently, I firmly agree.

The 800 is not a replacement for the V-Strom 650 – the standard 650 is a fine roadbike capable of tackling some light off-road terrain but will never be accused of being a true off-roader. The 800 on the other hand can be, as it's a far superior beast off-road than either the 650 or the 1050, which is what Suzuki set out to achieve when designing this new machine.

Even prior to riding the 800, a quick perv at the specs sheet spells out Suzuki's intentions for its new adventurer tourer. There's the new and compact parallel-twin engine out of the all-

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SUZUKI
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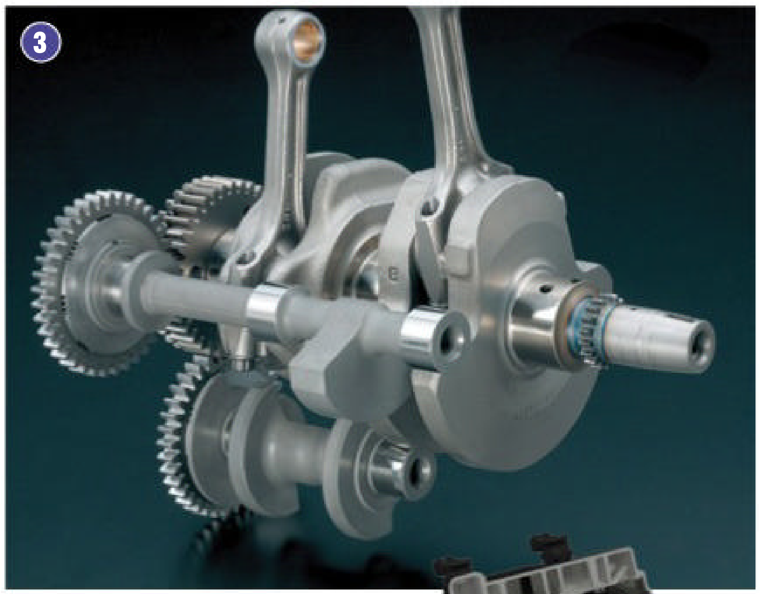
RIGID CONRODS PROMISE BETTER DURABILITY DURING THEIR HELLISH JOURNEY



1 NO CRUISE

Despite being marketed as an adventure tourer, the 800 doesn't come with cruise control and you can't purchase it as an option.

2 WHEEL BE RIGHT

A 21-inch front wheel and 17-inch rear wheel means your choice of rubber should be pretty wide. Both ends are tubed so don't forget your levers.

3 SCREENING PROCESS

The short screen doesn't provide a huge amount of weather protection. It is, however, height adjustable, but you'll need an allen key to raise or lower it.

4 HANG ON A MINUTE

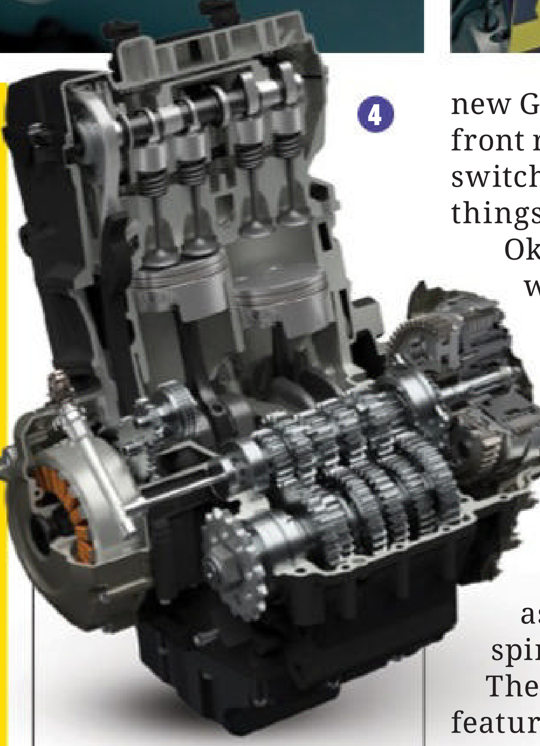
There's a handy carry rack with a 10kg capacity on the back, as well as large pillion grab handles to go with the comfy-looking pillion seat.

5 PLASTIC PLATE

It must be a V-Strom thing, because the oil filter hangs nice and low at the front of the engine and, despite this, the standard bashplate is plastic.

6 SHIFTY BUGGER

The 800 is fitted with a two-way quickshifter (yes, it's on the other side) that carves through the six-speed 'box like a knife through butter.



1. PV enjoyed the loose stuff on the 800DE

2. The screen is signature Suzuki: clear, crisp and easy to navigate

3. The balancer shafts keep the parallel-twin vibes down

4. The all-new engine will also power the upcoming GSX-8S roadster – with more to come

5. The shortish screen is three-way adjustable – tools still required, though

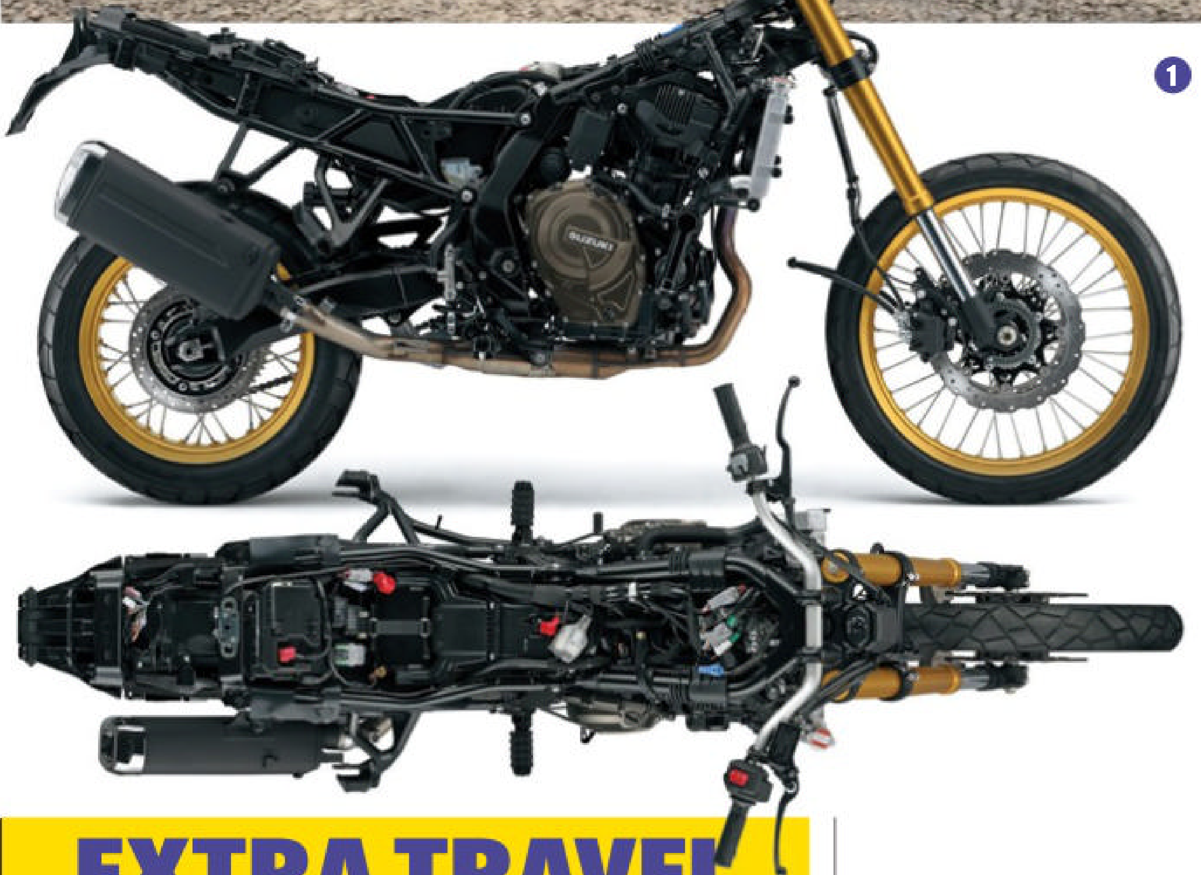
new GSX-8S, long-travel suspension, a 21-inch front rim and a squat windscreen, as well as switchable ABS with gravel ride mode – all the things a good adventure bike should have.

Okay, so let's dispense with the hand-wringing and belly-aching I've noticed online straight off. Now that it has a parallel-twin powering it, no it shouldn't be called a P-Strom. Not only does it sound lame, according to the Suzuki marketing department, V never actually stood for V-twin, anyway. No, apparently it stood for versatile and so the V-Strom name persists in this latest iteration… and as if a marketing department would ever spin a story to suit its own ends.

The new Euro 5-compliant 776cc parallel-twin features a 270-degree crank giving the P-twin a firing order similar to a V-twin, theoretically giving the 800 a punchy V-twin-like bottom end – which indeed it has. Forged pistons both increase strength and reduce weight, while each boast a conically machined wristpin hole which, according to Suzuki, transfers load more evenly which reduces stress on the piston crowns.

More rigid connecting rods promise better durability during their hellish journey, while the aluminium cylinders feature Suzuki's Composite Electrochemical Material (SCEM) plated barrels that are said to reduce friction and dissipate heat more effectively.

Keeping engine vibration to a minimum is a stacked dual-counter balancer that has both balancers sitting at 90-degrees to the crank, with each balancer responsible for smoothing the vibes from either pot one or pot two. According to Suzuki, the 800DE is the first production motorcycle to use such a system and it keeps the



1. A steel frame for the 800DE, moving away from the firm's aluminium twin-spar staple
2. LED lighting back and front
3. Weather protection more than out-and-out handguards
4. The rubber inserts can be quickly and easily removed
5. The Dunlop Trailmax Mixtour tyres err on the tarmac side of the adventure-touring equation
6. Remote preload adjustment is always a handy feature

whole ensemble more compact.

Wringing the ride-by-wire throttle feeds fuel from the 800's 20-litre tank to the water-cooled engine via an electronic fuel injection system and 42mm injectors. Suzuki's shiny new mill has a claimed maximum power output of 62kW (83hp) at 8500rpm and maximum torque of 78Nm which is delivered at 6800rpm. Power and torque are pumped to the 17-inch spoked rear wheel via a six-speed gearbox, with shifting handled by a two-way quickshifter.

Gone is the aluminium twin-spar frame of the 1050 and 650, replaced by a more conventional steel affair, while a (non-detachable) steel subframe has been beefed up to handle passengers, luggage and the rigours of off-road use.

The suspension is a major talking point with the new 800, because in the past it's one of the areas that probably dragged the V-Strom name into the mud, so to speak; it was decent on road,

EXTRA TRAVEL (220MM) ALLOWS THE 800 TO ENGAGE MORE SERIOUS OFF-ROAD SECTIONS

DON'T I KNOW YOU FROM SOMEWHERE?

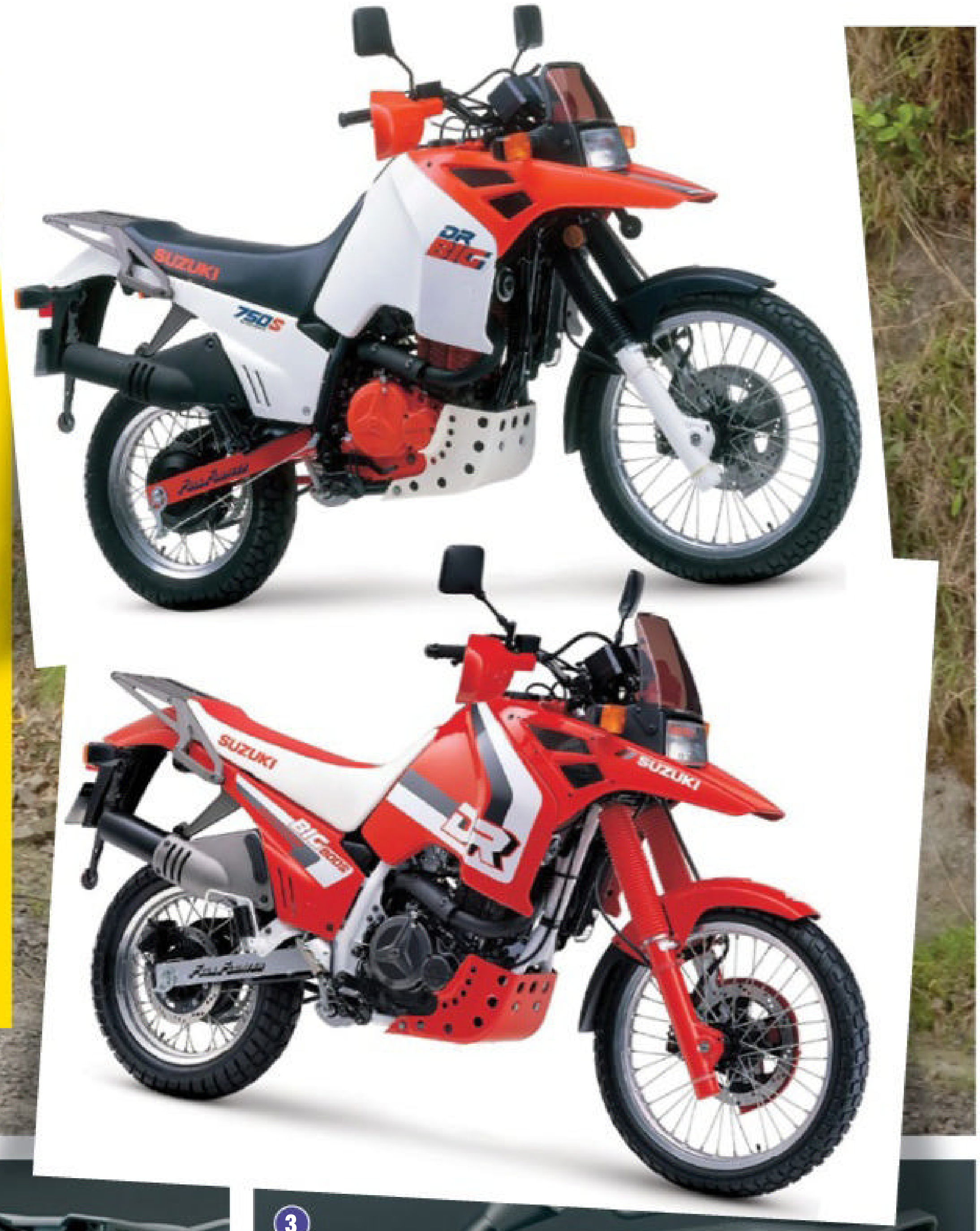
Suzuki's 1988 DR750S and 1990 DR800S

THERE'S NO HIDING the beak on the V-Strom 800DE or just about every other adventure bike on the market these days. Some think it's a BMW thing and indeed Beemer's GS range has had the 'beak' for a good few years. But the beak was actually Suzuki's creation and harks back to what are now considered classics of adventure bike history - the DR Big.

The distinctive Suzuki beak look started with the DR750S of 1988. The futuristic-looking machine with coloured engine cases and weird front guard was modeled off the company's DR Zeta factory rally bikes and was powered by an air-cooled 750cc single-cylinder four-valve engine with a single overhead cam and dual slingshot carburettors. The first Dr Big weighed a claimed 179kg (dry) and made 38.2kW (51.9hp) of power and 57.9Nm of torque. I remember these Dakar-inspired beasts going for a song in the mid- to late-80s before adventure bikes were cool - but now, if you can find one, you'll pay a pretty penny.

In 1990, Suzuki released its second and final DR Big, the DR800S. Visually similar in appearance, the 800's single-cylinder engine increased in capacity to 779cc, it gained a disc brake on the rear, lost the colour-coded engine cases and put on 6kg. Power increased a bee's doodle to 38.6kW (52.5hp), with a jump in torque from 57.9Nm to 59.4Nm.

Rather than being based on the 750S, the DR Zeta raced by Gaston Rahier in the Dakar Rally was configured around the DR800S. Apart from the engine mods and disc brake rear, the design and iconic beak remained unchanged until it was discontinued.



but not much chop off it. The front-end is adorned with a fully adjustable Showa fork that supplies 220mm of travel, while the rear shock, which also provides the same travel, is adjustable for rebound and features a tool-less external adjuster to tweak the preload.

It's the extended travel on offer that sets the 800 apart from previous V-Stroms. For instance, the 650 offers 150mm on the front and 159mm on the rear, while even the new 1050DE only offers 170mm and 179mm. This extra travel allows the 800 to engage more serious off-road sections and bigger obstacles without hitting the bump stops – and even the occasional erosion-hump launch isn't out of the question.

Due to the crap weather on the launch, I didn't have the chance to really test the suspension. At muddy road speeds it was just fine, ploughing through craters without destroying ankles, wrists or back; it provided me with a good dose of confidence. The rear shock can get into a tizz when exiting corrugated corners, but apart from that both ends offer a plush ride and there's always adjustment at your fingertips if you need more or less damping. Having said that, I'm looking forward to a more extensive off-road test in the near future and if I get the call up I'll take it bush and try to break it.

Braking is handled by a trio of Nissin calipers gripping a pair of 310mm discs on the front and 260mm on the rear, with switchable ABS on hand to cover your arse. And when it comes to the electronics package, the 800 is almost identical to the 1050DE: it uses the same five-inch colour TFT instrument cluster, offers four ride modes (A, B, C, and G), switchable traction control and LED lighting, as well as a USB power outlet on the

6
SPRING PRELOAD
HIGH
ADJUSTMENT
LOW

dash, plus a 12-volt socket under the seat.

In all of its glory, the 800DE tips the scales at a claimed 230kg, so it's in the ballpark with most adventure bikes of its ilk. It hides its weight very, very well though, and doesn't suffer from the top-heavy feel that its 1050 sibling does. Combine that with its 855mm seat height and I reckon you have yourself a mightily approachable adventure bike – even if you're not six foot tall.

The new frame also means the 800 is a bike that's skinnier through the waist and one that is less of a compromise when standing up compared to both of its siblings. Standing on the wide steel 'pegs feels natural, and the roomy cockpit and general ergonomics allow you to really move around on the 800 when you're standing or sitting. I would like some adjustability in the TFT screen to angle it up when standing. I'd also like a shed full of bikes and a butler, but that's just not on the cards...

Suzuki had stability in mind when designing the 800 and it has hit the nail on the head. Standing, sitting, fast, slow, road or off-road: the 800 is rock solid. The launch was a rainy affair so the dirt kilometres we did were a combination of mud and deep gravel with the occasional rockslide to contend with. I'm sure as poo not the best off-road rider around, but I have to commend the 800 for its stability and poise in those conditions – especially under brakes, conditions that would normally have certain orifices puckering and sweat glands activating.

The Nissin brakes have plenty of power and don't bite with the ferocity that some twin-disc setups do, so it's easy to modulate the lever for just the right amount of braking without upsetting the front-end when things get slick. Even at highway speeds, there's enough feel and power in the front and rear to avoid unnecessary activation of the ABS system. ABS can be adjusted to two levels of intervention and can also be

1. PV reckons the seat provides all-day comfort

2. The 800DE has a 20-litre fuel tank, which is more than its major competitors

3. Tubed tyres front and rear so pack your tyre levers

SUZUKI
V-STROM

LONG-LEGGED OPPONENTS

CFMoto 800MT Explore

Engine 799cc parallel-twin
Power 67kW (91hp) @ 9250rpm
Torque 75Nm @ 8000rpm
Seat height 825mm
Fuel capacity 19 litres
Weight 231kg (wet, claimed)
$16,490 (ride away)

BMW F 850 GS

Engine 853cc parallel-twin
Power 66kW (89hp) @ 8000rpm
Torque 86Nm @ 6250rpm
Seat height 860mm
Fuel capacity 15 litres
Weight 233kg (wet, claimed)
$20,285 (ride away)

Honda Transalp 750

Engine 755cc parallel-twin
Power 67.5kW (91hp) @ 9500rpm
Torque 75Nm @ 7250rpm
Seat height 850mm
Fuel capacity 16.9 litres
Weight 208kg (wet, claimed)
Price TBA

Yamaha Ténéré 700

Engine 689cc parallel-twin
Power 54kW (72hp) @ 9000rpm
Torque 68Nm @ 6500rpm
Seat height 880mm
Fuel capacity 16 litres
Weight 206kg (wet, claimed)
$19,999 (ride away)

3

switched off on the rear for off-road use.

The 800's donk produces a nice linear spread of torque that's perfectly suited to off-road riding. The A, B and C modes provide you with all 62kW (83hp) of power, but it's just the throttle response and power delivery that's different. A is the sharpest and C is the pussycat. In the loose stuff, the trick is to use the torque rather than bouncing of the rev limiter, and when you do the 800 rewards you with clean, predictable grunt. Flick it into Gravel mode or switch off the traction control and you'll get predictable and controlled power slides, too.

Like the 1050DE, the 800 has the G mode, which allows you to slide the rear tyre without ending up with it trying to overtake the front. For casual dirt riding and novice riders G mode is on the money, but for more experienced riders or riders that just like being a bit more sideways the system doesn't quite deliver the drift required to look and feel spectacular.

On the blacktop, the V-Strom's power comes into play a bit more. The torque is obviously still a benefit and the 800 pulls nicely out of tight hairpin corners, but you can really let the engine sing on the tarmac. Its 62kW might not seem like a lot, but it's more than enough to cater for most riders without being overwhelming or a handful. It'll loft the front wheel in second gear and overtaking isn't an issue – what more do you really need!

I'm a big fan of lower-powered bikes. For

THE DONK PRODUCES A LINEAR SPREAD OF TORQUE THAT'S SUITED TO OFF-ROAD RIDING

SPECS

ENGINE

Capacity 776cc
Type Parallel-twin, DOHC, 4 valves per cylinder
Bore & stroke 84mm x 70mm
Compression ratio 12.8:1
Cooling Liquid
Fueling EFI
Transmission Six-speed
Clutch Wet, multi-plate
Final drive Chain

PERFORMANCE

Power 62kW @ 8500rpm (claimed)
Torque 78Nm @ 6800rpm (claimed)
Top speed 180km/h (est)
Fuel consumption 4.4L/100km (claimed)

ELECTRONICS

Type Suzuki
Rider aids ABS, traction control, easy start, low rpm assist
Modes Active, Basic, Comfort and Gravel

CHASSIS

Frame material Steel
Frame type Bridge
Rake 28 degrees
Trail 114mm
Wheelbase 1570mm

SUSPENSION

Type Showa
Front: 45mm, USD telescopic fork, fully adjustable, 220mm travel
Rear: Monoshock, adjustable preload and rebound, 220mm travel

WHEELS & BRAKES

Wheels Wire-spoked aluminium
Front: 21 x 2.5 Rear: 17 x 4.0
Tyres Dunlop Trailmax Mixtour
Front: 90/90-21 (54H)
Rear: 150/70R17 (69H)
Brakes Nissin, ABS
Front: Twin 310mm discs, four-piston calipers
Rear: Single 260mm disc, dual-piston caliper

DIMENSIONS

Weight 230kg (kerb, claimed)
Seat height 855mm
Width 975mm
Height 1310mm
Length 2345mm
Ground clearance 220mm
Fuel capacity 20L

SERVICING & WARRANTY

Servicing First: 1000km
Minor: 12,000km
Major: 48,000km
Warranty Three years, unlimited kilometres

BUSINESS END

Price $18,590 ride away
Colour options Champion Yellow No. 2, Glass Mat Mechanical Gray or Glass Sparkle Black

CONTACT

www.suzukimotorcycles.com.au

THE DUNLOP MIXTOUR HOOPS STICK LIKE POO TO A HAIRPIECE

1. Plastic guard doesn't offer much in the way of protection

2. The USB power outlet on the dash

one, they give you a level of confidence you don't get on some fire-breathing monsters and, secondly, they allow and force you to focus on your technique. Now the 800DE is an adventure bike through and through, but it's also a damn fine road-going motorcycle. It's extremely comfortable – I was in the saddle for a solid day and returned back to base feeling good. On top of that, it handles really well, so there no reason you couldn't tour the countryside on the 800 or chase your mates through the mountains.

Some of the credit for the 800's impeccable road manners can be put down to the Dunlop Mixtour hoops. They stick like poo to a hairpiece on the road and are surprisingly okay on the dirt. That's not to say I wouldn't throw them in the bin if I bought one, it just depends on how much dirt you intend on tackling; if the answer is a lot, then something more off-road focussed needs to go on.

There's a long list of things I like about the 800DE. The six-litre airbox is stowed under the seat so filter changes while you're out bush should be a piece of cake. That seems like pretty basic stuff but airfilter access on some modern adventure bikes has become a joke – yes I'm talking to you Honda, KTM and Ducati.

I also really like the menu and controls for the electronics package. It's just so simple. You can get on a V-Strom 800 and have worked out how to navigate through the menu via the TFT within a couple of minutes. It's delightfully refreshing not to have to be a software engineer just to turn the ABS and traction control off.

Due to the whirlwind nature of the launch and the atrocious weather, this test wasn't as comprehensive as I'd like and I'm keen to jump on the 800 for a more extensive test. But, after the 300-plus kilometres I did rattle off, I walked away pretty impressed with the 800's performance both on- and off-road; it's a testament to the 800's wide-ranging abilities that I'm stinging to get back on one for a better go.

Suzuki has certainly produced a V-Strom that has a greater off-road focus and ability, but given the company has sold 440,000 road-focussed V-Stroms across the globe you need to wonder if that's what the average Joe wants. Buggered if I know, but I'm confident the 800 will absolutely hold its own with all but the top end of adventure bike town – and the real kicker is the price. For $18,590, you're riding away on a hell of a lot of do-anything, go-anywhere motorcycle.

Super comfortable, as stable as a rock and ticks all the boxes an adventure bike should. 👍	PROS AND CONS	👎 No cruise control, she's weighty and the V-Strom legacy might turn some hard adventure riders off.

LeoVince
TITANIUM

LeoVince

RIDE. DOMINATE. ROAR.

LV-10

The LV-10 is the slip-on that we developed directly from our experience in MotoGP and SBK racing, and in collaboration with the best Moto2 and Moto3 teams. We designed an exhaust system with extremely compact dimensions to grant maximum lightness, the best performance and the unmistakable LeoVince racing sound.

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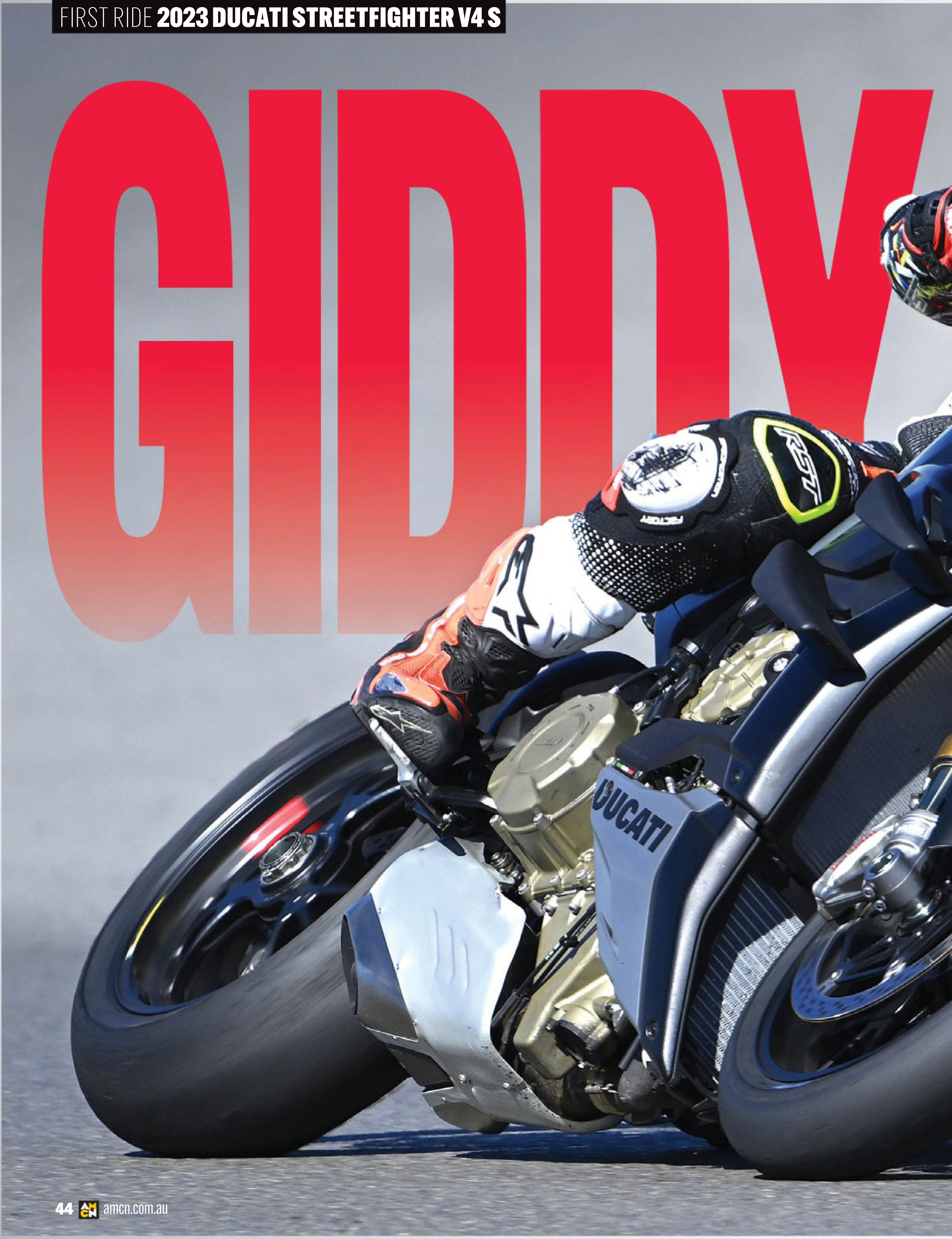
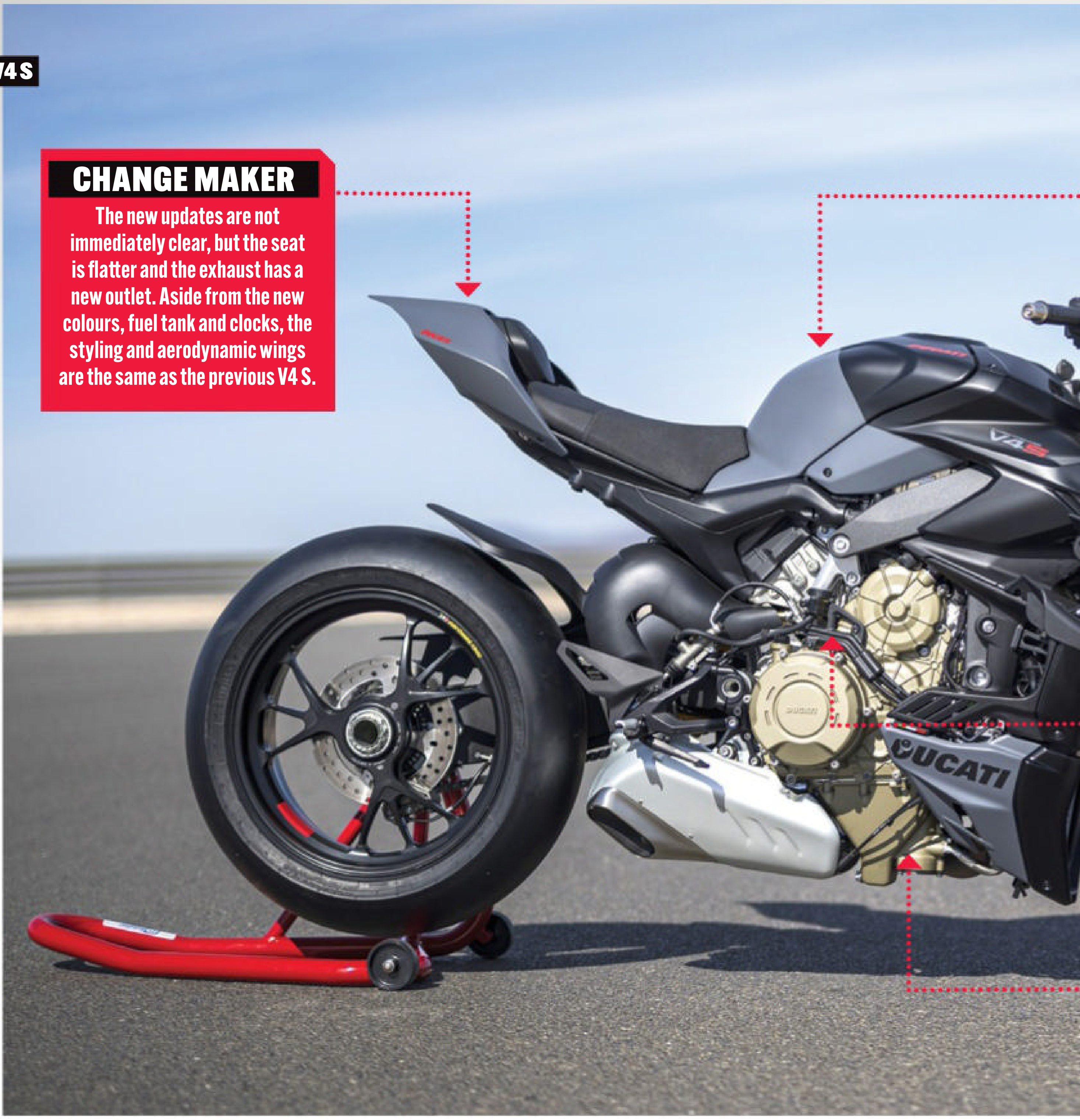
GIDDY



UP!

TEST **ADAM CHILD** + PHOTOGRAPHY **ALEX PHOTO**

Ducati Streetfighter gets superbike updates for 2023. **Yee haa!**



CHANGE MAKER

The new updates are not immediately clear, but the seat is flatter and the exhaust has a new outlet. Aside from the new colours, fuel tank and clocks, the styling and aerodynamic wings are the same as the previous V4 S.

Ducati hasn't made vast changes to the new Streetfighter V4 S for 2023, mainly because the planet's most ferocious nakedbike didn't really require any.

Power from the immense V4 Desmosedici Stradale remains at a claimed 155kW (208hp). So hardly an issue there. Peak torque also remains capped at 123Nm, an amount that no sane human being would complain about. Top-spec Brembo Stylema brakes remain, as does the main chassis and its superbike-inspired geometry.

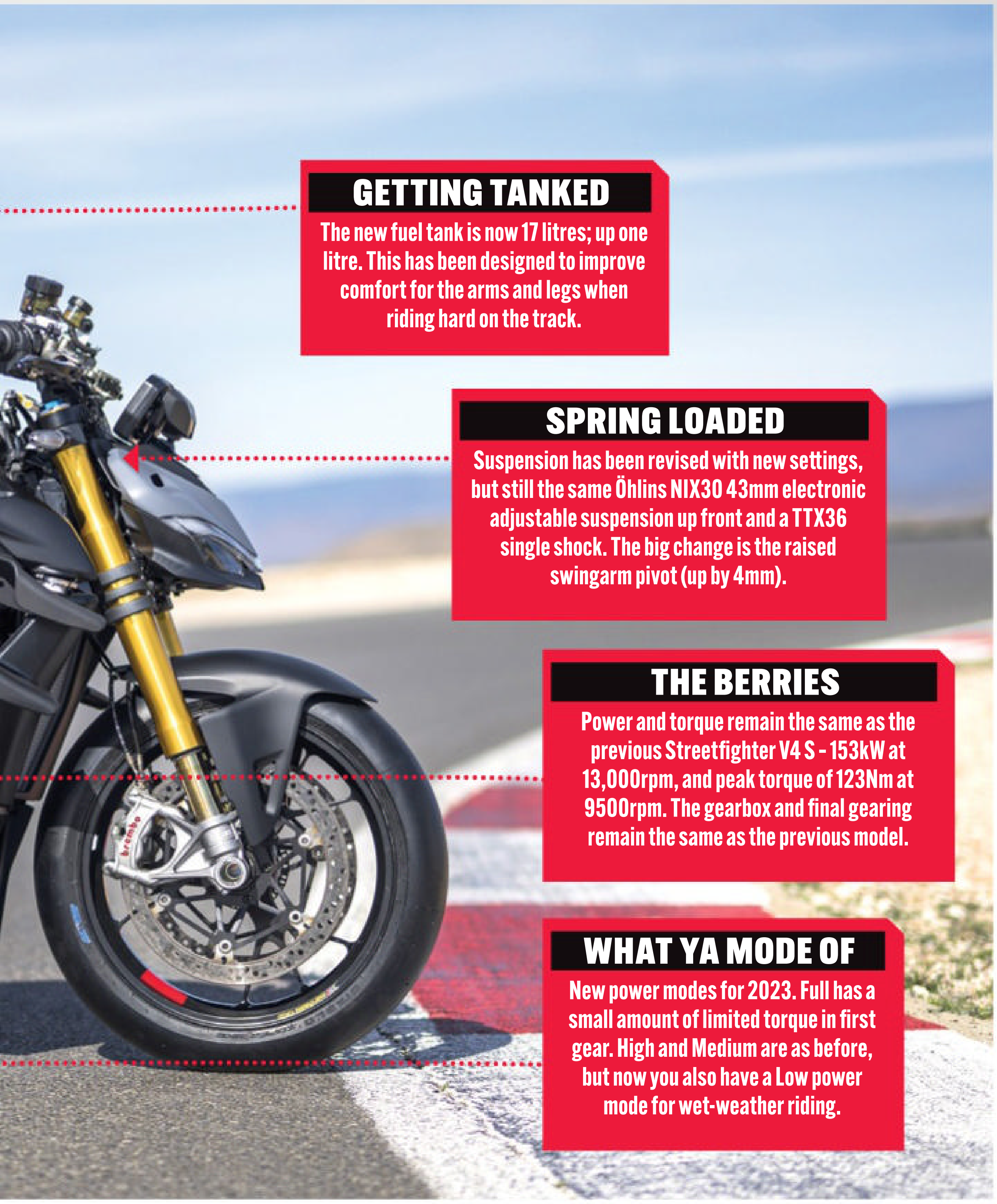
Ducati has, however, tweaked the ergonomics and electronics, a similar bag of tricks performed last year to the Panigale V4, to make the Streetfighter V4 faster, madder and, believe it or not, easier to ride than ever.

To test the new 2023 updates, we headed to the tricky and challenging Circuito de Andalucía in Spain to see if we could feel the differences and experience one of the most demanding nakedbikes on the market. In fact, the Streetfighter V4 S feels like it could have even been tamed a little – like it had a few horses shaved from its brutally potent motor – and I'd have been happy, because every time you ride one on track you know you are in for a serious full-body-and-brain workout – it's a beast like no other.

Before we get to the relative subtlety of the 2023 updates, it's worth re-familiarising with the sledgehammer itself. I spent the early sessions of this test using the Sport mode: short-shifting on the new super-smooth two-way quickshifter, trying to re-learn the racetrack.

But despite not pushing for a fast lap and barely bothering the business end of the rev range in each gear, the V4 felt utterly up for the fight. Like barely contained fury.

Once back into some sort of Andalucian groove, it was time to start pushing for a fast lap in the super-focused Race mode. Race mode displays the Panigale dash, which clearly highlights the active rider aids in colour down the right side, plus an unmissably large gear position indicator,



GETTING TANKED

The new fuel tank is now 17 litres; up one litre. This has been designed to improve comfort for the arms and legs when riding hard on the track.

SPRING LOADED

Suspension has been revised with new settings, but still the same Öhlins NIX30 43mm electronic adjustable suspension up front and a TTX36 single shock. The big change is the raised swingarm pivot (up by 4mm).

THE BERRIES

Power and torque remain the same as the previous Streetfighter V4 S - 153kW at 13,000rpm, and peak torque of 123Nm at 9500rpm. The gearbox and final gearing remain the same as the previous model.

WHAT YA MODE OF

New power modes for 2023. Full has a small amount of limited torque in first gear. High and Medium are as before, but now you also have a Low power mode for wet-weather riding.

EVERY FACET MAKES IT FEEL AND BEHAVE LIKE AN UNFAIRED FACTORY RACER

huge rev counter and the (utterly addictive and optional) GPS lap timer.

Race and Sport modes share the same peak power and torque curves, with torque limited in the lower gears, but crucially, and more on this later, the Öhlins semi-active suspension delivers a tauter ride in Race.

With the race dash active, it's almost impossible not to chase a lap time on the perpetually up-for-it Streetfighter, and all-too tempting to treat every lap like Superpole, especially as every facet of the Streetfighter makes it feel and behave like an unfaired factory-issued racer.

It loves to rev and makes hard power all the way to the redline. On Andalucia's back straight it was still accelerating in fifth gear at 250km/h. Every time I opened the throttle it tried to separate my arms from their sockets as I was shoved back onto the seat's bum-stop.

It's beyond muscular but, of course, being a modern Ducati, immaculately sophisticated too. What could and should be motorcycling chaos every time the throttle is opened is actually an exercise in measured efficiency and communication. As the world disappears behind you, the Streetfighter's suite of updated rider aids are illuminating the dash as they busily and

1. Choose your mode and away you go – very quickly, it seems

2. The engine has remained unchanged, but you'll still get an intense 155kW/123Nm examination

3. Öhlins semi-active suspension

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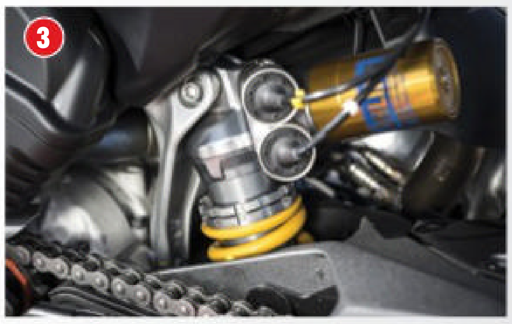
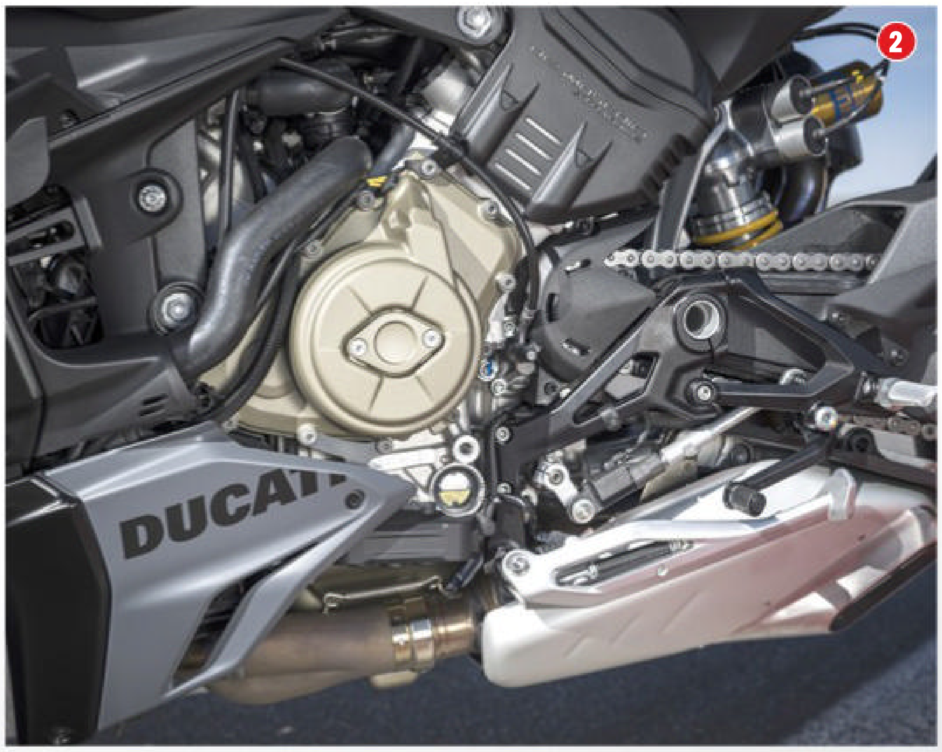




brilliantly suppress wheelies or send the traction control into overtime (despite running soft Pirelli slicks in perfect conditions) – and keep the bike planted, gripping and driving forwards in a relentless manner.

Later in the day, with my brain sort of dialled into Streetfighter World, I selected the new full-power engine mode (Full), which sits outside the riding mode options and has to be selected manually. And the only thing it does is limit the V4's torque fractionally in first gear; every other gear is full fat – you're on your own, kid.

Until that point I thought the Streetfighter was desperately quick – like few other bikes I've ridden in 25 years of testing and racing – but this was another step. As I've found with Ducati's Panigale V4, which I've ridden several times on track, an unrestrained, unleashed Stradale V4 stretches your mind as much as your arms. It gives both the rider and rider aids an intense examination and an even tougher workout that demands everything in terms of commitment and concentration.

It's shockingly good fun. In fact, selecting Full is probably one of the most exciting things you can do on a motorcycle – and some highly tuned riders may prefer it to the more managed engine strategies (High, Medium and Low) when chasing that compelling lap timer. But if I was to ride on track all day, I'd favour the limited torque strategies, which give both the rider and outstanding electronics an easier time. For normal humans that also translates to a more enjoyable and satisfying ride. Probably quicker, too.

So yes, the new 2023 Streetfighter is certainly sporty – sporty in the way Mike Tyson could get a bit snarky sometimes – but how much sportier it is than the previous model is hard to quantify. In testing, Ducati test riders were reportedly one-second faster on the new model compared to the older, fractionally heavier bike.

But for me, the real story is that the new machine is simply easier to ride fast.

Chassis-wise, the S model's suspension remains Öhlins Smart EC 2.0 semi-active (spring preload is manually adjustable as before) but Ducati has raised the swingarm pivot to reduce squat (up 4mm) and moved weight forward, too, while tweaking the S model's NIX30 fork to create a 'sportier', firmer feel, more like the Panigale. The bike's weight is down by 1.7kg thanks to a new lithium-ion battery, but all other components and dimensions remain the same.

The suspension settings in Sport mode are nicely judged, with the bike relatively soft on track and easy to live with, and clearly made for a brisk ride up your favourite road. Up the tempo to the sharp end of the fast group though, and it becomes apparent that you need to opt for Race mode. As noted, power, torque and throttle remain the same, but the semi-active suspension

1. Grey Nero is one of two liveries – the other is Ducati Red

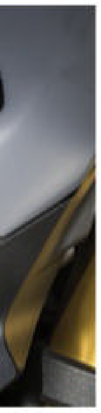
2. In typical Ducati fashion, the TFT screen oozes sophistication

3. A bump stop for when the acceleration hits warp mode

4. The Brembo Stylema brakes are absolute powerhouses

5. Adam's been reviewing motorcycles for about 20 years, and he may have a new favourite

AN UNRESTRAINED, UNLEASHED STRADALE V4 STRETCHES YOUR MIND AS MUCH AS YOUR ARMS



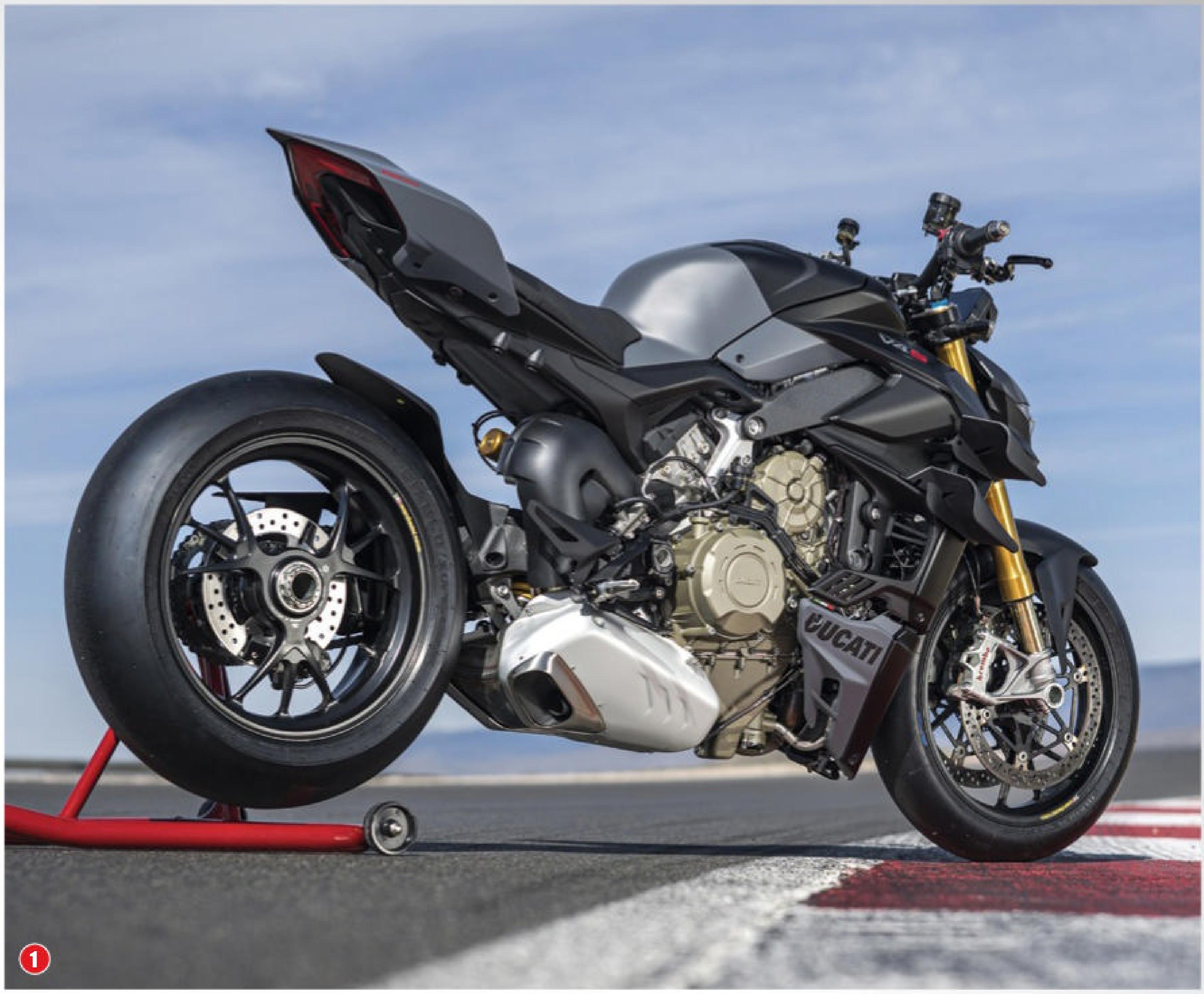
STREET SMART RIVALS

TRIUMPH SPEED TRIPLE 1200 RS
$28,490 (plus on-road costs)

APRILIA TUONO V4 FACTORY
$33,330 (ride away)

BMW M 1000 R
$32,290 (plus on-road costs)

KTM 1290 SUPER DUKE R EVO
$32,115 (ride away)



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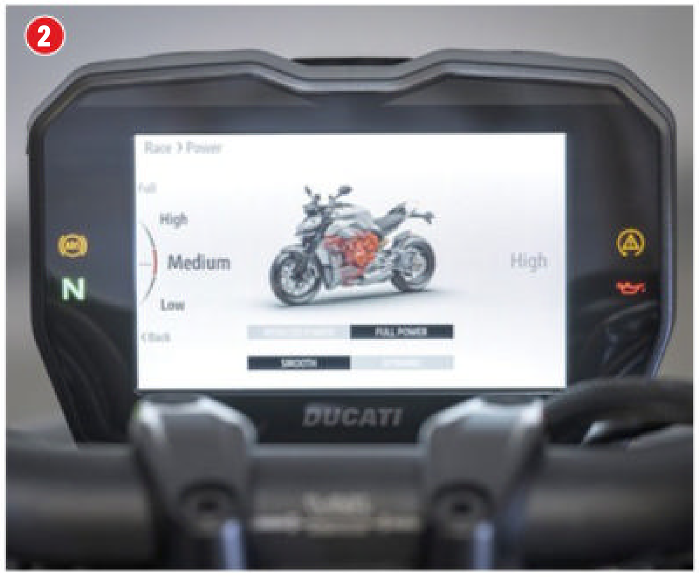

②

Race > Power
Full
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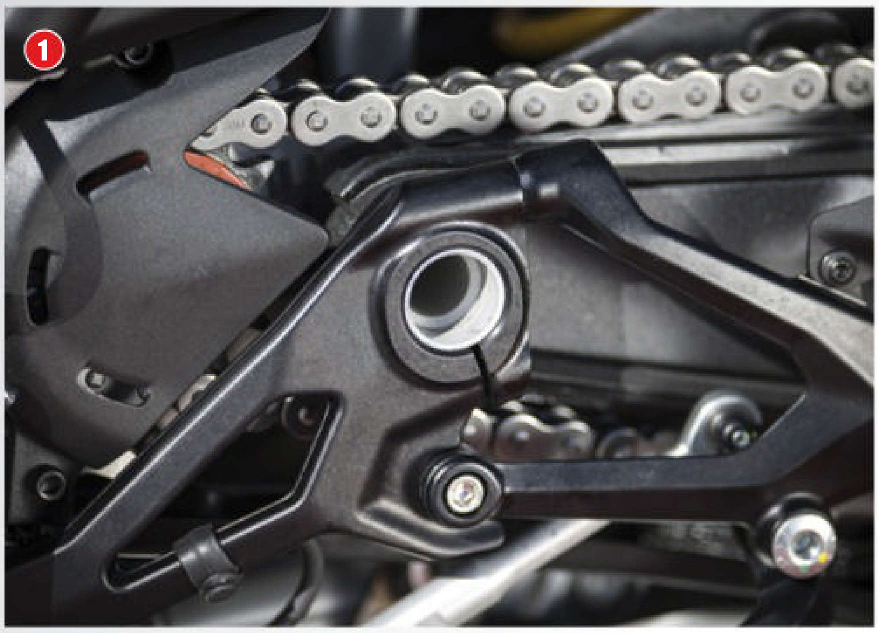


makes a dramatic shift from road to track. The weight of the bike is more supported, the chassis feels livelier, easier to turn and ground clearance is improved. Within half a lap you are carrying even more corner speed and confidence.

So while it's true that the Streetfighter is a demanding and physical beast to ride hard, it is discernibly less demanding to ride fast – if that makes sense. Until you go for an absolute lap time, the sheer brilliance of the suspension and electronics help you drive early off turns, using as many of those 208 Ducati horses as conditions allow – and help you do it lap after lap.

Although unchanged for 2023, the feel and bite from the Brembo Stylema brakes are simply sublime. Stability is excellent, stopping power is absolutely stupendous and the new, one-litre larger fuel tank allows you to stay seated in the saddle with less effort.

The brakes are backed up by excellent Cornering ABS EVO and the new Engine Brake Control EVO 2, which has three levels, and now engine braking is controlled whilst monitoring lean angle, gear and throttle. When you hit the brakes, there is very little traction on the rear, therefore less engine braking; as you release the brake and approach the corner apex, there is more engine braking, depending on speed, gear and lean angle.

As mentioned, the track dash display gives live readouts of the rider-aid intervention, clearly showing in full colour which ones you are using. Once back in the pits, you can scroll through your lap data, scrutinise lap times, discover your maximum lean and revs, top speed and even your maximum yaw, which is the measurement of the slide.

THE SHEER BRILLIANCE OF THE SUSPENSION AND ELECTRONICS HELP YOU DRIVE EARLY OFF TURNS

Just to see what the beast would do, I removed the Ducati Wheelie Control (DWC) and predictably enough the Streetfighter raised its lightweight three-spoke alloy front wheel in first, second and third gears on a mere whiff of throttle over crests. It's far easier and faster to lap with DWC active. Same story for the Ducati Traction Control (DTC) and Ducati Slide Control (DSC).

The rider aids and new track dash make it all so easy, helping turn the Streetfighter into a supremely quick and fluent track device beyond the dreams of trackday regulars of just a couple of years ago. Rider aids aren't for everyone but chasing lap times, trimming the electronics to suit, and watching the lap times fall can become wonderfully consuming.

This was a track-only test, therefore we can't test fuel range, but the new 17-litre tank should give a slightly greater range. Quoted fuel economy stays the same at 7.6L/100km and, if the fuel tank provides more support on track, it should do the

1. Superb attention to detail

2. Muscular from all angles, and impossibly enjoyable on the road and/or racetrack

3. Adam gets down to business, with the electronics turning it into a supremely quick proposition

2

STABLE OF FIGHTERS

THERE ARE actually no fewer than five members of the Streetfighter family: the familiar and current V2, the new V4, V4 S, V4 SP2, and the very exclusive V4 Lamborghini.

The base Streetfighter V4 features manually adjustable suspension, 43mm Showa BPF forks and Sachs single shock on the rear as opposed to the semi-active Öhlins units on the V4 S and up models. The standard V4 comes with cast alloy wheels, the V4 S forged alloy Marchesini, and the SP2 lighter still with carbon-fibre wheels.

The base and S model come with the same Brembo Stylema stoppers, but the SP2 gets the upgraded Stylema R calipers. Quoted wet weights are slightly different: 201.5kg, 197.5kg for the S and 196.5kg for the SP2, but power and torque remain the same across all models.

Ride away prices range from the V-twin V2 at $24,200 all the way through to the eye-watering expensive and very exclusive Lamborghini at $92,600.

3

SPECS

ENGINE

Capacity 1103cc
Type V4, desmodromic, four valves per cylinder
Bore & stroke 81mm x 53.4mm
Compression ratio 14.0:1
Cooling Liquid
Fueling EFI
Transmission Six-speed
Clutch Wet, multi-plate, slipper
Final drive Chain

PERFORMANCE

Power 153kW (208hp) @ 13,000rpm (claimed)
Torque 123Nm @ 9500rpm (claimed)
Top speed 300km/h (est)
Fuel consumption 7.6L/100km (measured)

ELECTRONICS

Type Bosch
Rider aids Riding Modes, Power Modes, Cornering ABS EVO, Ducati Traction Control EVO 2, Ducati Wheelie Control EVO, Ducati Slide Control, Engine Brake Control EVO 2, Auto tyre calibration, Ducati Power Launch, Ducati Quick Shift EVO 2
Rider modes Race, Sport, Street or Wet

CHASSIS

Frame material Alloy
Frame type Monocoque
Rake 24.5º
Trail 100mm
Wheelbase 1488mm

SUSPENSION

Type Öhlins semi-active
Front: 43mm USD, fully adjustable fork, 120mm travel
Rear: Monoshock, fully adjustable, 130mm travel

WHEELS & BRAKES

Wheels Alloy, three-spoke
Front: 17 x 3.5 Rear: 17 x 6.0
Tyres Pirelli Diablo Rosso IV Corsa
Front: 120/70ZR17
Rear: 200/60ZR17
Brakes Brembo, ABS
Front: Twin 330mm discs, four-piston Stylema calipers
Rear: Single 245mm disc, twin-piston caliper

DIMENSIONS

Weight 178kg (dry, claimed)
Seat height 845mm
Width Not given
Height Not given
Length Not given
Ground clearance Not given
Fuel capacity 17L

SERVICING & WARRANTY

Servicing First: 1000km
Minor: 12,000km
Major: 24,000km
Warranty Two years, unlimited kilometres

BUSINESS END

Price $39,000 (ride away)
Colour options Grey Nero or Ducati Red

CONTACT

www.ducati.com/au

same on the road.

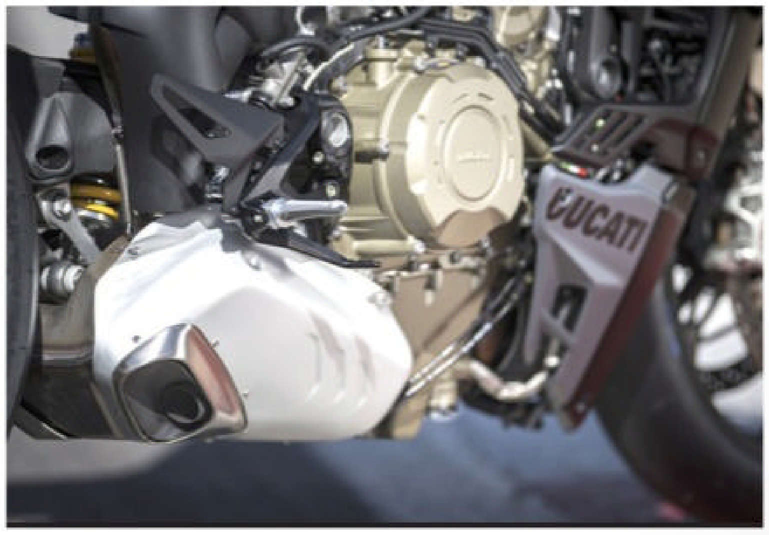
There is a new Wet riding mode that limits power to a mere (123kW) 165hp, while throttle response and rider aids also reconfigure accordingly. As is often the case, this wet-weather mode might also be useful as a town mode or to save on fuel consumption.

Ridden in isolation it is difficult to quantify how much faster or better the 2023 updates have made the Ducati Streetfighter V4 S, especially as the key components – Desmosedici Stradale V4, chassis and brakes – are virtually unchanged from the 2022 machine.

The tweaks have, however, made for a sportier setup. The new Panigale V4 dash isn't just functional and visually appealing, it also helps turn the Streetfighter into an even sharper trackday tool than before. Yes, the bike is a beast that has to be ridden to be believed but it is also notably more refined and responsive – and easier to ride at a good pace.

With the price of the base model set at $34,900 (ride away) and the price of the S at $39,000, this is a bike for the seriously committed.

But on track you will own a bike capable of taking it directly to the superbike squad and, as the 2022 bike has proved, one that also offers a comfortable ride home afterwards.



IT IS ALSO NOTABLY MORE REFINED AND RESPONSIVE – AND EASIER TO RIDE AT A GOOD PACE

It's a ferocious piece of kit that provides a sublime seat-of-the-pants track experience - and then you can ride it home in relative comfort.

PROS AND CONS

All this functionality and potency doesn't come cheap, so you'd want to be really invested to take the plunge. Otherwise, a lower-spec model may be a better option.

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SPIN

CLASS

Pirelli's updated hypersport family is now complete with the latest two-tiered super-sticky Supercorsas

WORDS **MARK FATTORE** +
PHOTOGRAPHY **ANDREW GOSLING & NICK EDARDS**

"If it looks grippy, it probably is." A sentence that's probably been uttered thousands of times when the conversation turns to motorcycle tyres and, after sampling the latest incarnation of Pirelli's Diablo Supercorsa hoops, I can now add to the chorus: the tyres look like sticky merchants, and they damn well are!

The release of the Diablo Supercorsa V4 range now completes the fourth-generation of Pirelli's road-based hypersport family, which also includes the Diablo Rosso ('the sporty tyre for the road') and Diablo Rosso Corsa ('the fiercer version of the Diablo Rosso').

It was apt that AMCN ventured to the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit to sample the new product, just a day after defending champion Alvaro Bautista had swept the floor in the opening round of the Superbike World Championship on his factory Ducati Panigale R.

The location was no coincidence, as Pirelli's two-decade association with the WorldSBK series as the official tyre supplier has a direct link to the Supercorsas – the ultimate 'open air laboratory', so to speak. In fact, Pirelli's motorsport roots across myriad of two- and four-wheeled categories go back 116 years, so that amounts to quite the vast knowledge bank.

In terms of Pirelli's hypersport line-up, the Supercorsas are the pin-ups for the company's 'sell what we race' mantra, where the land/sea ratio – the level of grooves compared to rubber – is the lowest on record.

Sure, there's an element of 'street-legal slicks' about it, but even within those sporty parameters the latest-generation Supercorsas – which feature a mix of silica and carbon black compounds and have a new tread, profiles, carcass and stiffer sidewall – still suit a wide variety of riders, bikes and abilities.

Thanks to the structural gains, the latest Supercorsas are also claimed to have better damping qualities, while Pirelli's signature 'flash'-shaped groove continues to promote more consistent wear and better water dispersion.

The Supercorsas are available across two tiers: the SP, which is pitched towards road riders and those who enjoy the occasional racetrack outing; while the SC has a dedicated track focus. There's only one SP tyre, but three versions of the SC: 1, 2 and 3. Let's take a closer look.

SP FROM TRACK TO ROAD

The SP is a dual-compound road-biased tyre, with the hard centre and base focusing on durability, consistent wear, wet-weather performance and a quick-fire warm-up period. The centre then morphs into race-compound flanks, so you'll get plenty of grip at extreme lean angles. The flank compound is the same as the SC3 track-based tyre, which in effect means it's a slick.

The tyre is designed to work effectively with both road and track pressures, while the rear has what Pirelli calls an "Adaptive Base Compound" which is 100 percent black carbon and runs along the base of the tyre. The main advantages are in its endurance and thermal properties, so it will continue to work well even when the ambient and track temperatures aren't ideal, and it'll cope with constant heat cycles (going from hot to cold). Phillip Island was the perfect micro-climate to test those claims!

And speak of the devil, due to a shortened day – pesky precipitation the culprit – I only had one 15-minute session on the SP tyres, but like the 2023 BMW S 1000 RR I was riding my ability was no match for the professionalism they brought to the Phillip Island table.

I was pushing as hard as my talent, confidence levels and tight-fitting leathers would allow, and on the fast and flowing grand prix circuit I did manage to get the rear tyre to ball up nicely – a proud moment after a long racetrack hiatus.

Conversely, I wasn't pushing the front anywhere near its capacity, but that was to be expected as my pace was on the moderate side. Even with my speed limitations, it's hard – and always has been – to review tyres in isolation and compare them against previous incarnations, as their efficacy on any given day is based on so many variables including ambient and track temperature, machine setup, the condition of the circuit, etc.

Although SP is not recommended as a track-only tyre, thanks to the SC3 shoulders I'd happily leave it as a permanent fixture on my sportsbike or sporty naked if I only did the odd rideday, interspersed with spirited road riding.

But if venues like Phillip Island or Sydney Motorsport Park are your more favourite happy hunting grounds, then let's take a look at what the SCs bring to the table.

1. How could it not be fun: a 2023 BMW S 1000 RR and the latest Pirellis!

2. The launch crew - there were some seriously impressive speedsters in that lot, too

3. New benchmark: the most aggressive land/sea ratio on a Pirelli road-legal tyre

4. Just one day before the same pitlane was buzzing with WorldSBK action

5. BMW WorldSBK rider Garrett Gerloff (right) was on hand to deliver some S 1000 RR wisdom; he's chatting with BMW motorsport boss Marc Bongers

6. The tyre warmers were fitted to the SC1 tyres; they require 50 minutes toasting at 80 degrees Celcius

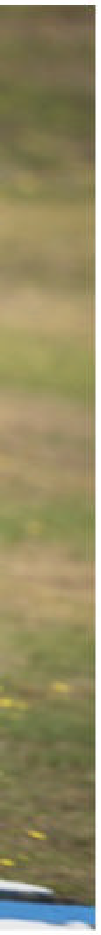
SC THE TREADED RACING TYRE

This is where the Supercorsa range gets to the real business end of firepower and performance as mileage takes more of a back seat. The SC development emanates directly from the slicks that Bautista, Jonathan Rea, Toprak Razgatlioglu et al use in the Superbike World Championship.

The SC1 and SC2 are the two most extreme compounds, ideally pre-heated with tyre warmers and perfect for those who are racers or track addicts. The SC1 prefers a smoother surface and, according to Pirelli, has the "best contact feeling", while the SC2's two main calling cards are stability and consistency – and it doesn't mind abrasive surfaces, either.

Meanwhile the SC3 adds more endurance into the mix – which is why the compound is used on the shoulders of the SP tyres for extra longevity. The SC3 doesn't require tyre warmers and has no problems with multiple heat cycles – which is why Pirelli is banking on club racers lapping it up. And if your lap times are only moderate, perhaps the SC3 is just the ticket for you.

Unfortunately, we can't provide a definitive



TYRELESS EFFORT

IT'S HARD to believe it's been 20 years since Pirelli first became the official tyre supplier for WorldSBK. The financial commitment, resources and dedication to remain a technical partner for that long deserves massive kudos – and of course what Pirelli gets in return with brand awareness, consumer engagement, product development and reputation is worth its weight in gold. And it's been the key driver in the development of the Diablo Supercorsa V4 family.

And the numbers over two decades of WorldSBK competition are bewildering: one million tyres have been used, and two million kilometres logged across 18 countries and 32 different circuits. Its winning percentage is okay, too...

SIZING IT UP

THE DIABLO Supercorsa V4 range suits a variety of sportsbikes, all 17-inch and ZR rated.

There are two SP fronts, in 110 and 120 widths, and eight rears from 140 to 200, with prices ranging from $299.95 to $499.95.

The three SC compounds also straddle all the major widths and profiles, with the same starting price as the SP but topping out at $529.95 for the 200/60 rear.

Check with your local dealer for availability, as not all the profiles have yet arrived in Australia.

word on that just yet, as only SC1s were fitted to the S 1000 RRs – but at least they were well up to working temperature by the time my session came around. A few of the other media had already commented that the scrub-in period for the SC1s was minimal, so a lot of the hard work had already been done. That left me a little more emboldened than expected – while also getting a feel for the S 1000 RR, which I hadn't ridden in about seven years. A lot has changed in that time...

The SC1s are for bona-fide hard men and women, and I could just hear the hoops laughing at the mild examination I was putting them through – even though I was cracking the throttle open the best I could and trying to vary things up. But if I can take anything out of the exercise it's that treaded racing tyres certainly deliver breathtaking results, and I can see why several domestic series around the globe have adopted the Pirelli SCs as their control tyre.

We've never had it so good on the tyre front – and Pirelli has certainly come a long way since manufacturing its first motorcycle radial in the early 1980s.

WHOLE SHOT

Jack Miller's debut for KTM in MotoGP was never going to be a fall-under-the-radar affair, and the Queenslander obliged with a mighty effort at Portimao - and his air time was the pick of the bunch!

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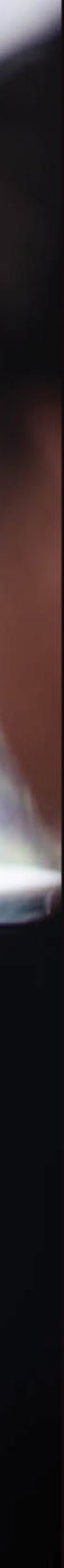


INTERVIEW **KEL BUCKLEY** + PHOTOGRAPHY **MATTY HAYMAN & AMCN ARCHIVES**

NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOE

Joe Elasmar is clever, passionate and just a little bit bold. And through his business Urban Moto Imports, he's currently the only independent motorcycle distributor in Australia

Joe Elasmar epitomises the phrase 'you make your own luck.' Educated decisions, calculated risks and plenty of hard work is how he's found himself as Australia's only independent motorcycle distributor at just 38 years old. Even as a kid growing up in the southeast Melbourne suburb of Pascoe Vale, measured risks rather than hope and chance were what made things happen for him.

"I bought my first bike and my parents didn't even know it was mine," he grins. "I told them it was my friend's bike who needed to store it at our place – it was a YZ80J."

We're sitting in the boardroom of a flash new 35-tenancy warehouse that he recently built, overlooking the suburb he grew up in. There's a likeable shyness to his demeanour that belies the expanse of the new building around us, that not only houses his successful enterprise, but 34 other local businesses also. As well as a landlord, he's a dad of three boys under 10 and he's the sole director of Urban Moto Imports (UMI) which looks after the distribution of eight brands across Australia and New Zealand. With Royal Enfield, MV Agusta, Benelli, Peugeot, Super Soco, Rieju, Torrot and Segway in its portfolio, UMI celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2021 and the company has experienced steady growth in the face of what's been reported as an industry in decline.

"UMI formed in 2011, but along the way I set up some retail, we were a dealer for a few different brands, but it wasn't our thing," he says, after admitting he began importing products out of Asia and the US when he was as young as 19. "I saw that there were so many unique brands that weren't able to survive in this country as a standalone. So when the GFC hit, some of these brands exited the market, we had customers that owned certain product and to service and maintain them, we started to communicate with the factories. So out of necessity relationships were born, in the case of Benelli and Bimota, and in 2011 they said would you consider taking on the distribution?

"And then it was like, yeah, let's sink our teeth into this. It was a big step, a big mindset change, a lot more red tape and we quickly

discovered it's a lot of hard work."

Talking to him, you get the impression he doesn't mind a bit of hard work, but as the conversation progresses, it becomes abundantly clear he's a bloke who likes to develop ways to work smarter, not harder. And when you're a plucky 27-year old willing to take on what was a fairly traditional motorcycle industry dominated by corporate Japanese brands, hard work and self belief is key to success – but so is a fresh approach.

His team of in-house software developers is a good example. Where other businesses look towards commercially available dealer support programs, costs which would otherwise get passed onto dealers, UMI develops its own tailored to its individual needs.

"We've developed our own proprietary software out of necessity over the years, and we've developed something that really allows us to support our dealers without having to put a cost towards it," he explains. "Recently we introduced some website iFrames which means dealers can basically just drop into their website and their website remains updated with all the most relevant data. They're not having to go in and rebuild sites constantly; we're maintaining it and doing all of that in the back end.

"And our B2B software gives dealers access to everything: it's spare parts ordering, it's accessories ordering, it's vehicle ordering, it's availability, it's news, it's service bulletins, it's leads management and everything in between. It's about making it as easy as possible for a dealer to have a customer standing in front of them and be able to give them all the answers they require."

Another approach UMI puts plenty of focus towards, and especially with Royal Enfield, is building like-minded communities through UMI-led experiences long after the financial transaction has been completed.

"The amount of people who are willing to start motorcycling or return to motorcycling because of our brands, we're really focused on that. The community-building activities that we do, that's really what drives a lot of this," he says.

"We've got a big push and a big focus in the year ahead to redefine what it is that we need to be delivering to dealers, what dealers need to be delivering to end customers and together, what it is that we can provide the customer in terms of experience and community."

Twelve years ago, the Australian motorcycle industry looked a lot different than it does today. Lead by Honda, the big four Japanese brands ruled the Australian sales roost, with Harley-Davidson the next best performing brand convincing Aussies to part with their hard-earned.

According to the figures reported by Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries' (FCAI) membership, sportsbikes dominated the sales charts and there wasn't an adventure bike to be seen in the list of best-selling roadbikes; that year BMW sold just 265 units of its R 1200 GS compared to 2172 Honda CBR250Rs.

In 2011, there were as many as 45 paid-up members of the FCAI. Today, according to the organisation's website, that membership has shrunk to just 17 brands. Admittedly, there were brands in Australia 12 years ago that no longer exist which would have contributed to the decline – marques like Megelli, Hyosung and Victory, for example. But there are others, too, like Elasmar's growing portfolio, that can't necessarily justify the cost of FCAI membership, nor do they feel the need to fall into line with their peers just because that's how it's always been done.

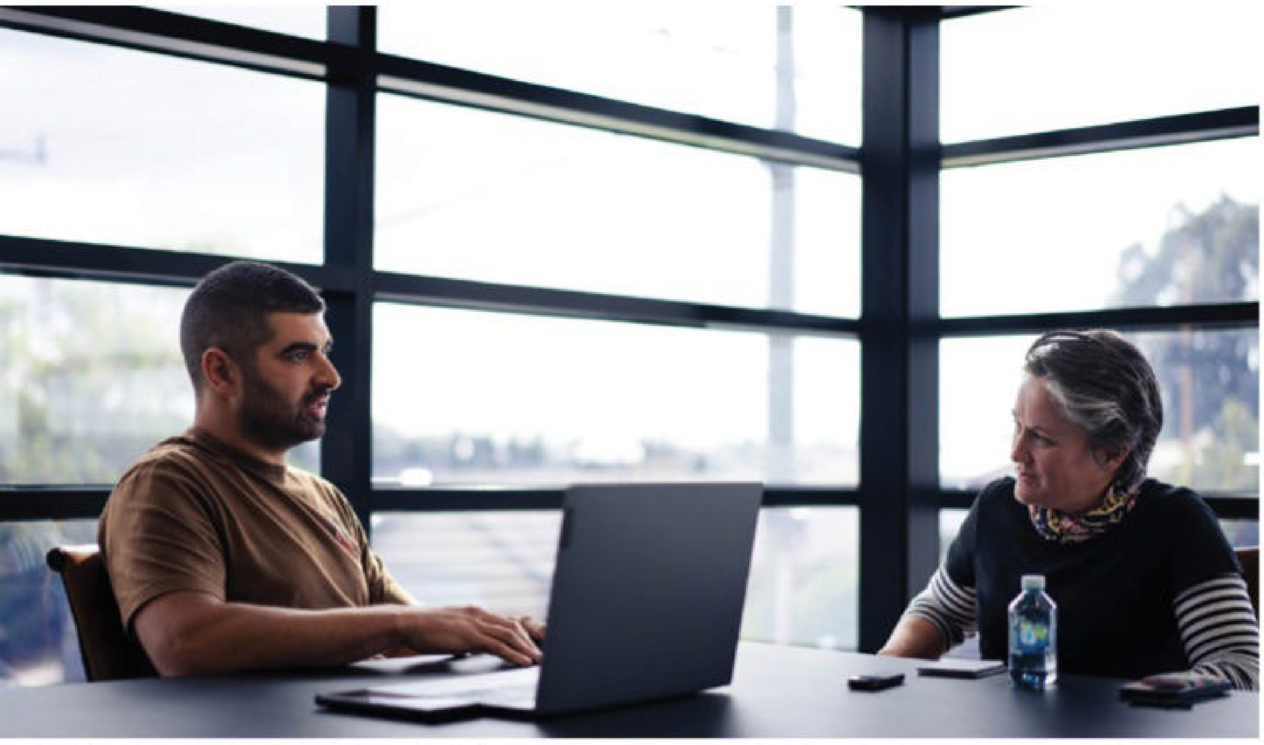
"Look, in the early stages, putting all of our [sales] numbers out there, when you've got these major conglomerates focusing and honing in on you to know exactly what you're doing and where you're doing it – it didn't make sense in that regard for us," he explains. "We've put forward that we'd be willing to possibly come to an arrangement and submit our numbers forward, but from my understanding, the willingness to reciprocate data wasn't there without being a member."

Which might go some way in explaining why the FCAI stopped reporting sales results for individual brands and machinery at the end of 2020, opting in the reporting periods since to only publish overall numbers across the industry's four segments: roadbikes, off-road bikes, scooters and UTVs.

And it's no coincidence that

Benelli
Benelli
ENFIELD
1

"WE'VE GONE FROM A FEW HUNDRED UNITS ANNUALLY WHEN WE FIRST STARTED OUT [IN 2011] TO CLOSE TO 6000"



WHEN BUSINESS IS A-ROCKIN'

The way Elasmar does business has earned him a good reputation in the global motorcycle industry. With both BSA and Moto Morini both currently on the hunt for an Australian distributor, we had to ask the questions...

How many phone calls have you had from BSA?

[laughs] We are constantly being approached, but at the end of the day we've got to make decisions based on what makes sense for business at that time and also for the dealer network, what the market's capable of. One thing we don't ever want to do is be in a position where our brands are cannibalising each other.

And Moto Morini?

A lot of people have been knocking, but look, we're remaining focused on what we're doing. That's not to say never, but right here, right now, the global economy's doing some interesting things, so we need to be cautious.

Launching brands takes time, effort, energy and investment. And just because you launch a brand, it doesn't mean it's going to sell.

1. Benelli, one of the UMI originals alongside Bimota, remains a vital cog in the business

2. Joe's own 120-year Royal Enfield Continental GT takes pride of place in the UMI foyer

3. The new Royal Enfield Super Meteor 650, powered by the brand's heralded parallel-twin

4. MV Agusta: will it remain in the UMI fold long-term?

UMI imports brands into all four sectors. In terms of roadbikes, there's Royal Enfield, Benelli, MV Agusta and Super Soco; off-road brands consist of Spanish marques Rieju and Torrot; scooters are covered off with Peugeot and Super Soco; while the UTV end of the market is looked after by Segway, which is Elasmar's most recent acquisition.

"We've gone from a few hundred units annually when we first started out [in 2011] to close to 6000 units annually across Australia and New Zealand," he offers. "It's significant growth, but I think the area where we'll see a lot more growth is in the mining and agricultural space with Segway."

The fact that UMI took on an ATV brand at the time big hitters like Yamaha and Suzuki were withdrawing from the market due to the increased complexities caused by the controversial mandate of installing roll-over protection devices (ROPs) to all vehicles, is yet another example of that measured risk Elasmar is so good at.

"As for the ROPs, it wasn't too complex," he said before he stopped himself and started again.

"Actually, I shouldn't say it wasn't too complex. We spent the time with lawyers, with stakeholders, understanding the procedure early on. We worked with a department out of New South Wales, which is one of the government testing facilities, and worked with a locally accredited provider, and together we were able to provide a product to the market which not only meets the standards, but exceeds them."

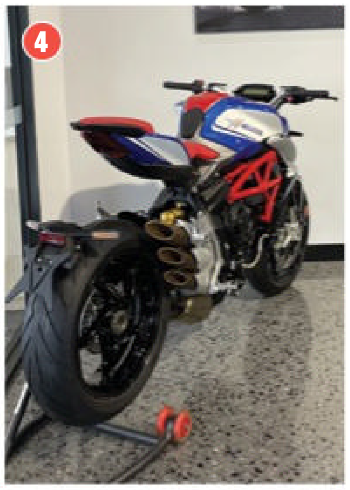
In 2019, UMI imported a range of Super Soco electric commuter bikes and, as far as Elasmar's aware, was the first in Australia to do so. Risky business in a country as big as this one, populated by generations of people bought up on classic petrol-powered machinery.

"If you compare Australia and New Zealand with Europe and other parts of Asia, we are way behind," nods Elasmar. "But in a small commuter product, electric makes sense. It's allowed us to become very familiar with electric technology and it's also allowed us to go into the dealer network and open their eyes. Yes, in the early stages it was disregarded in the sense that it's just too much of a learning curve for the traditional motorcycle dealership. Now that acceptance is definitely in a much better position."

But it's not just dealers and would-be owners who need convincing to adapt to new technologies around urban mobility, as Elasmar found out when he was involved in the introduction of Australia's first-ever rideshare platform that same year. As well as supplying the scooters, UMI developed the software interface and devices that talked to the main servers in order to engage or disengage the vehicles as and when a ride-share user required it.

"It was shortlived," he says. "The company we worked with took about 50 Super Soco units at the time, they were a European company trying

THERE'S A BRUTALE 800 AMERICA IN THE CORNER WHICH HAS PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO HIM



1. The new UMI facility is much larger than the last

2. The unique Royal Enfield Military Edition

3. Super Soco joined the UMI fray in 2019, but it's been a slow burn

4. The special-edition MV Agusta Brutale 800 America – and No. 1 off the production line!

to launch in Australia and they came up against stumbling blocks and hurdles with government and councils and whatever else.

"But I think cities are starting to understand there's an increasing need for mobility and maybe that doesn't look like a registered vehicle as such, so it's a case of understanding where these two worlds collide."

As well as having the distributorship for MV Agusta in Australia and New Zealand, in 2017 UMI became the official distributor for Canada and North America.

"I was there for just a bit over three years, but with the change in management in MV and what they wanted to achieve, I said 'guys, there's an opportunity to buy the company back off me', and in March 2020 that happened, just before Covid hit," he says. "For me, it was perfect timing. We were able to exit that and then remain focused on everything else, we had a massive growth phase over those few years so it needed serious focus."

With KTM's recent acquisition of 25.1 percent of MV Agusta and its intentions to increase that considerably in the coming years, it must feel like groundhog day for Elasmar who was the official importer for GasGas before KTM purchased the brand, forcing Elasmar to relinquish it.

"At the moment, we're still operating, we're still selling MV and we're still supplying spare parts, but there is more news that will come from that," he says. "At the moment we're going through a bit of a process with KTM, so we'll see where that lands. From everything we've discussed so far, they've been very positive and the willingness to want to work with us is there; it's just a case of everyone being able to agree on whatever it might be in the final stage."

MV has played an important role in getting UMI to where it is today, with Elasmar taking over the distributorship of the Italian brand in Australia and New Zealand in 2015 and then having the confidence to take on North America two years later. And as well as a 120-year Royal Enfield Continental GT parked in the middle of the room, which Elasmar says he "absolutely loves", there's a MV Agusta Brutale 800 America parked in the corner which has particular significance to him.

"When I took over North America, one of the things that I'd arranged with Giovani Castiglioni was that I said 'hey, let's create a special edition to announce this new takeover of North America, let's create 50 special-edition Brutales to celebrate the 50 states of North America.' I got number one off the production line and brought that here to Australia, I think he took number 12, and the rest went to the US."

Elasmar's passion for motorcycles is pretty clear to see. That same passion that drove him to buy himself a two-stroke dirtbike three decades ago and convince his parents it was someone else's is still what gets him out of bed these days. And dirtbikes are still very much an important part of his life.

"I've got my Rieju MR300 Pro and that's my weekend bike, and my kids are on their Torrot motocross bikes. I've got three boys; Jackson is nine, Jordan's almost seven and little James is two and they all love bikes," he grins. "My wife Diana is a little bit concerned that she's being overrun by all these boys that ride motorcycles, but she loves seeing them out there happy – she's got to close her eyes sometimes!

"But anything with two wheels and it's a good day out."

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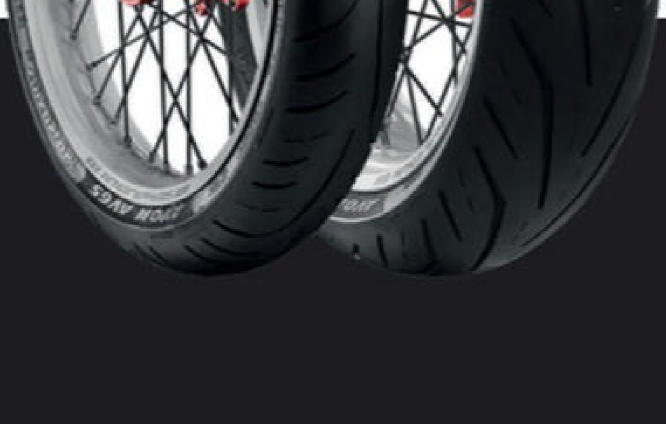

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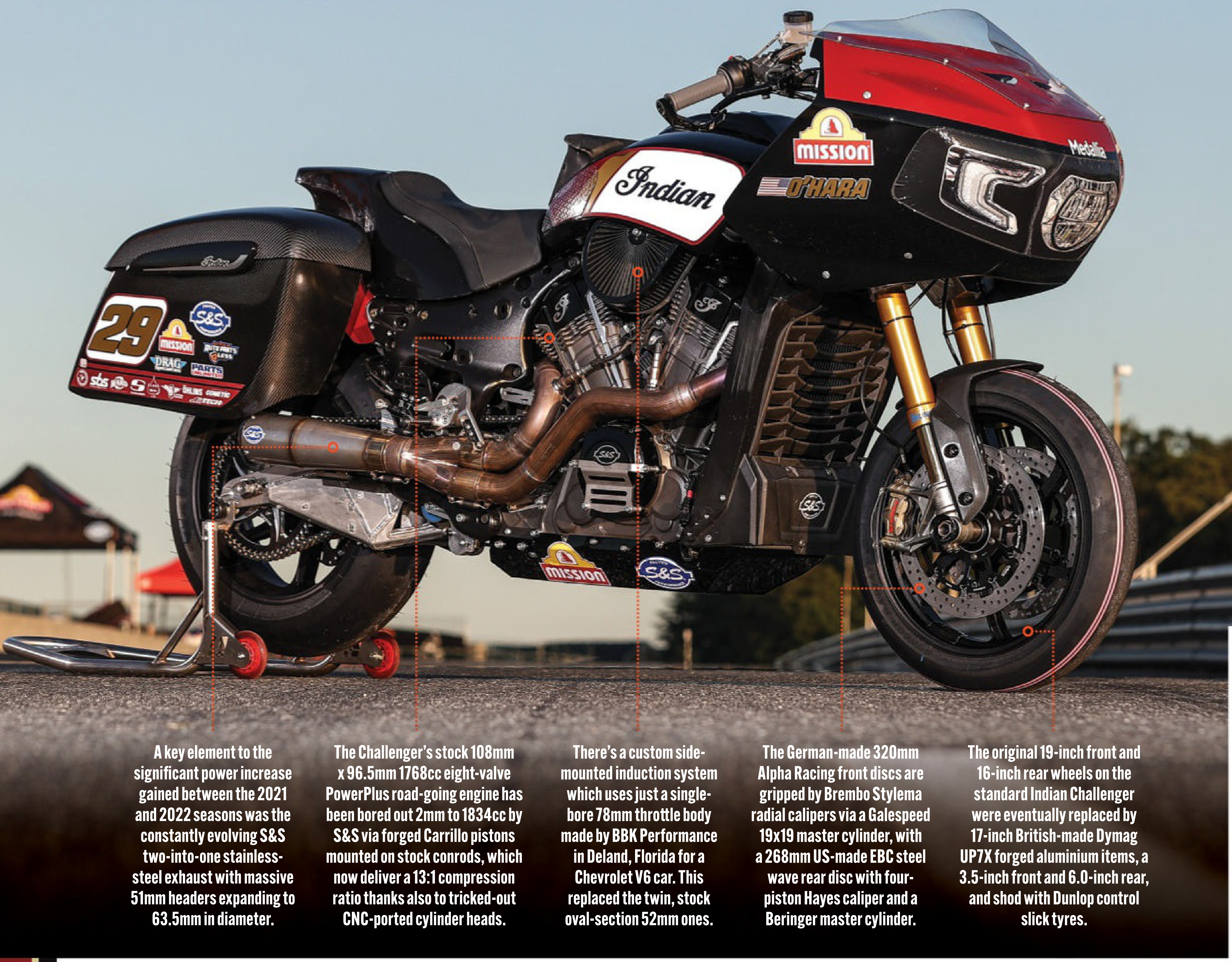
MEANS WAR

Forget those 160kg MotoGP bikes making 250hp: we snag a ride on a hotted-up 283kg Indian Challenger pumping out 203Nm and good for 60 degrees of lean angle!

TEST **ALAN CATHCART** +
PHOTOGRAPHY **SUPPLIED**

Of all of the different road racers, factory MotoGP and 500GP bikes, countless world Superbike contenders and numerous home-brewed and factory-built musclebikes, nothing I've ever ridden compares to the factory Indian Challenger on which Tyler O'Hara won the 2022 MotoAmerica King of the Baggers crown. In terms of its sheer improbability coupled with its mammoth size, hefty weight and downright belligerence, nothing comes remotely close.

And when O'Hara and Indian snatched the crown off their Harley-Davidson rivals at the end of last year, it reignited the century-old on-track warfare between America's two leading manufacturers. Indian versus Harley is the oldest brand rivalry in motorcycle sport, and the pair has been at each other's intakes to earn bragging rights to road racing's King of the Baggers (KotB) crown, in the ultra-ridiculous but potentially very lucrative pursuit of going racing with tuned-up versions of their best-selling V-twin



A key element to the significant power increase gained between the 2021 and 2022 seasons was the constantly evolving S&S two-into-one stainless-steel exhaust with massive 51mm headers expanding to 63.5mm in diameter.

The Challenger's stock 108mm x 96.5mm 1768cc eight-valve PowerPlus road-going engine has been bored out 2mm to 1834cc by S&S via forged Carrillo pistons mounted on stock conrods, which now deliver a 13:1 compression ratio thanks also to tricked-out CNC-ported cylinder heads.

There's a custom side-mounted induction system which uses just a single-bore 78mm throttle body made by BBK Performance in Deland, Florida for a Chevrolet V6 car. This replaced the twin, stock oval-section 52mm ones.

The German-made 320mm Alpha Racing front discs are gripped by Brembo Stylema radial calipers via a Galespeed 19x19 master cylinder, with a 268mm US-made EBC steel wave rear disc with four-piston Hayes caliper and a Beringer master cylinder.

The original 19-inch front and 16-inch rear wheels on the standard Indian Challenger were eventually replaced by 17-inch British-made Dymag UP7X forged aluminium items, a 3.5-inch front and 6.0-inch rear, and shod with Dunlop control slick tyres.

1. Sir Al gets settled in: massive motorcycle, but quite a cramped riding position

2. S&S's Director of Engineering, Jeff Bailey

3. The 2023 Indian race team: McWilliams and O'Hara

4. Öhlins TTX36 rear suspension

5. The steering damper comes in very handy when the Indian starts to get the heebie jeebies

6. Can O'Hara or McWilliams make it consecutive Bagger titles for Indian? H-D will be trying its best to not let that happen...

roadbikes. And it's war.

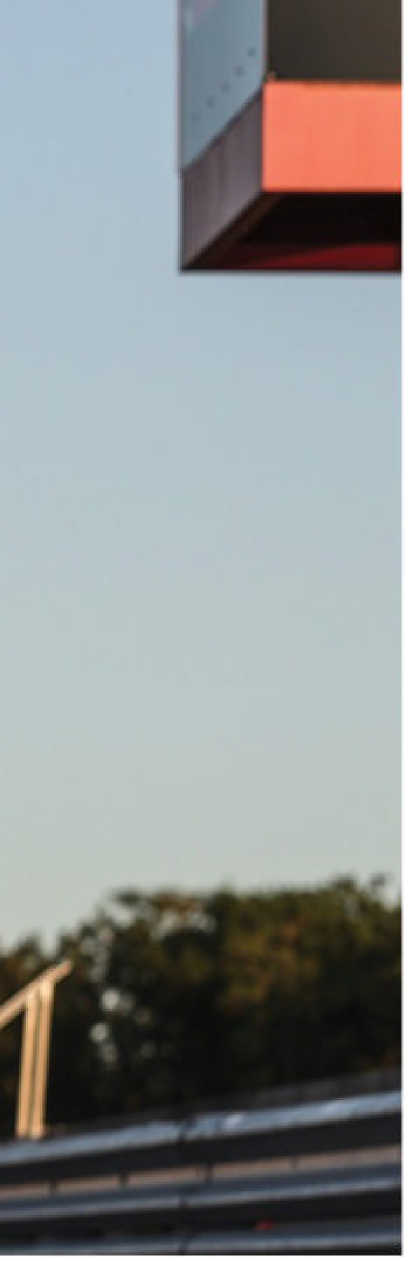
O'Hara clinched the 2022 King of the Baggers title in a nail-biting rain-lashed finale in New Jersey by splashing to second place behind Harley-Davidson's Travis Wyman. His season-long consistency – he was fourth or better in each of the seven races – allowed O'Hara to secure the 2022 KotB Championship by 10 points from Wyman, two ahead of brother Kyle, with Indian teammate Jeremy McWilliams fourth in the final standings.

With a miffed Harley-Davidson considerably ramping up its 2023 race budget in an effort to regain the title, and relative minnow Indian – whose annual production is one-sixth that of Harley – intensifying development of its Challenger RR via its race partner S&S, the Bagger race series has now doubled in size for 2023. There are 14 races at seven different events – all double-headers – in what has now become the direct two-wheeled equivalent of NASCAR.

The MotoAmerica-run series is for American V-twins equipped with a fairing and chassis-mounted twin luggage bags, which must evolve from street-legal motorcycles carrying a VIN on the frame. This must be unmodified, although Indian secured an exemption to shorten the Challenger's front frame spars wrapping the stock radiator by an inch or so to stop them grounding at the incredible 60° lean angles O'Hara and McWilliams crank over to (against a stock 31°!).

The original-shape bodywork must be retained, albeit in whatever material is preferred, so while the Challenger racer's front fairing is an injection-moulded item straight off the production line, its rear-mounted bags are made of carbon-fibre to help push weight distribution forward.

There's a 281kg minimum weight limit including oil, water and any remaining fuel in the cut'n'shut stock tank after each qualifying session or race. This requires the cast aluminium-framed Challenger to carry 6.8kg of ballast, which brings it to the 283kg mark the team usually runs to counter the inconsistencies in each racetrack's scales. That's quite surprisingly split 51/49 percent



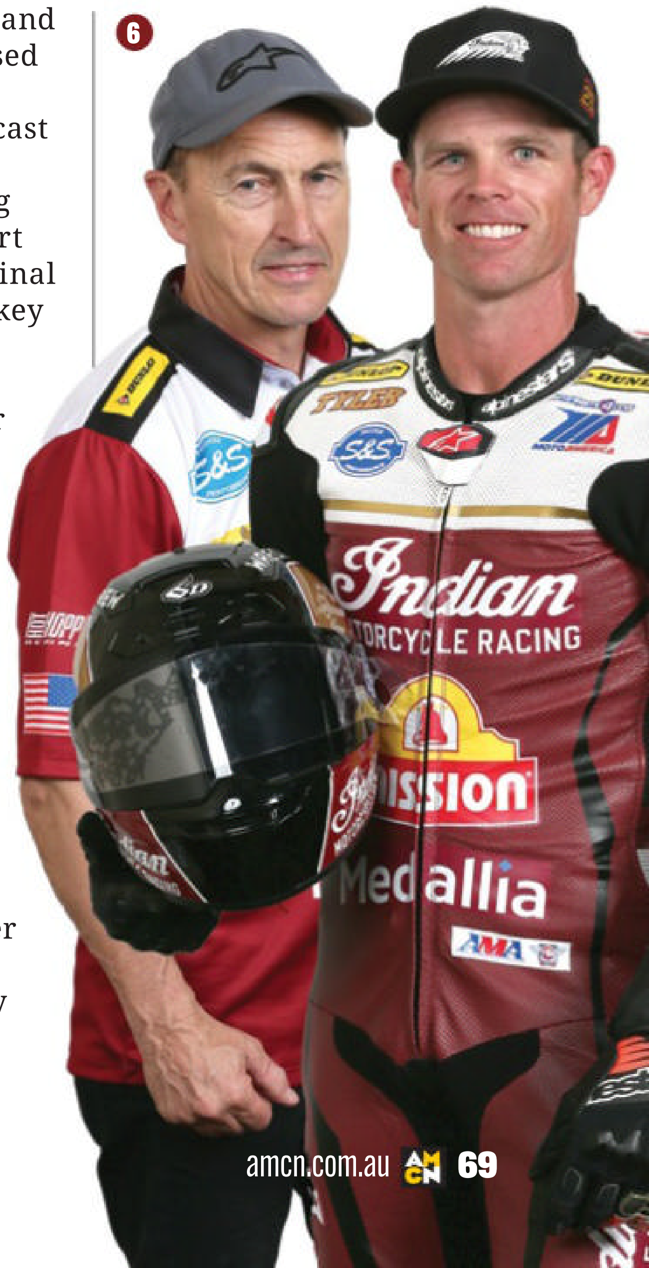
> **“THE ÖHLINS TTX36 REAR SUSPENSION WORKS BETTER WITH THE SHORTER SWINGARM”**

static, without rider – look at the bike side-on and it looks w-a-a-y long, which it is, and rear-biased weight-wise, which it’s not.

For long it certainly is, as despite the stock cast aluminium swingarm being retained (albeit heavily braced), S&S’s Director of Engineering Jeff Bailey says the Indian must be run as short as possible owing to the conversion to chain final drive from the stock belt, complete with a jockey wheel added to maintain required tension.

“The Öhlins TTX36 rear suspension works better with the shorter swingarm, even if for overall vehicle dynamics longer is better, so as to get more weight onto the front wheel,” he says, which delivers the 1640mm wheelbase as ridden at Chuckwalla that’s still mega-rangy by road-racing standards. The fully adjustable 48mm Öhlins FG8603 fork is set at an unmodified 25° rake, with 114mm trail delivered via an adjustable S&S-made billet aluminium tripleclamp, with just 15mm of offset.

“That fork comes from a Ducati Multistrada 1200 V-twin, and we bought it off eBay because of its extra length in giving 170mm of wheel travel,” says Bailey. “Together with the stock rake, that gives us extra front ride height in pursuit of the greater necessary ground clearance, which is the biggest challenge in making these bikes into racers.



The downside is they're not the latest technology in internal valving and damping, so for 2023 we're using a current Öhlins FGR250 superbike fork."

After much experimentation, the original 19-inch front and 16-inch rear wheels were eventually replaced by 17-inch forged aluminium items – a 3.50-inch front and 6.0-inch rear shod with Dunlop control tyres. These wheels carry German-made 320mm Alpha Racing front brake discs gripped by Brembo Stylema calipers, with a 268mm US-made EBC steel wave rear disc with four-piston Hayes caliper – operated on O'Hara's machine via a thumb lever, but on the McWilliams testbike by a conventional lever.

The Challenger's stock 1768cc eight-valve engine making 90kW (121hp) at 5500rpm at the crank and 178Nm of torque at 3800rpm has been bored out 2mm to 1834cc by S&S via forged pistons mounted on stock conrods, which now deliver a 13:1 compression ratio thanks also to tricked-out CNC-ported cylinder heads.

With the 17.7kg stock crankshaft lightened by "10 to 20 pounds" [4.5-9kg!] according to Bailey (2023 rules see this limited to just 10 percent of the original weight), but with the main bearings locked in place for increased durability this helps deliver a significant increase in power and torque for the liquid-cooled 60° V-twin engine with a chain-driven SOHC.

"More than 170hp at 7700rpm," says Bailey, which is already pretty respectable – but with humongous peak torque of "over 150ft/lb [203Nm] at 5000 revs," which is something else entirely.

This comes with the aid of S&S racing camshafts offering both greater lift and extra duration to the stock valves operated via all-new rocker arms machined at S&S out of solid steel billet.

"We've really focused a lot on airflow," says Bailey. "Hence the custom side-mounted induction system with just a single-bore 78mm throttle body made for a Chevrolet V6 car. The problem is that the stock airbox is actually the frame backbone, so

1. Hard to believe it has the acceleration of a MotoGP bike!

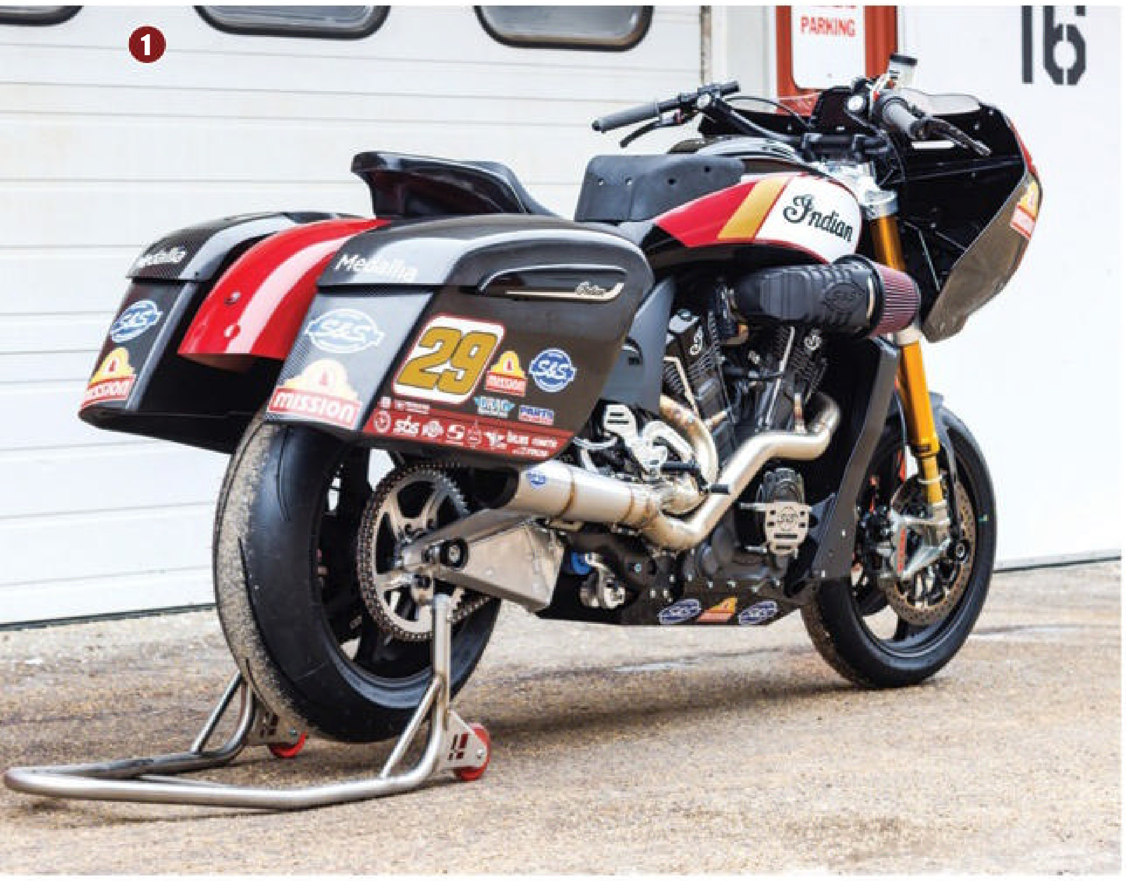
2. The S&S forged pistons

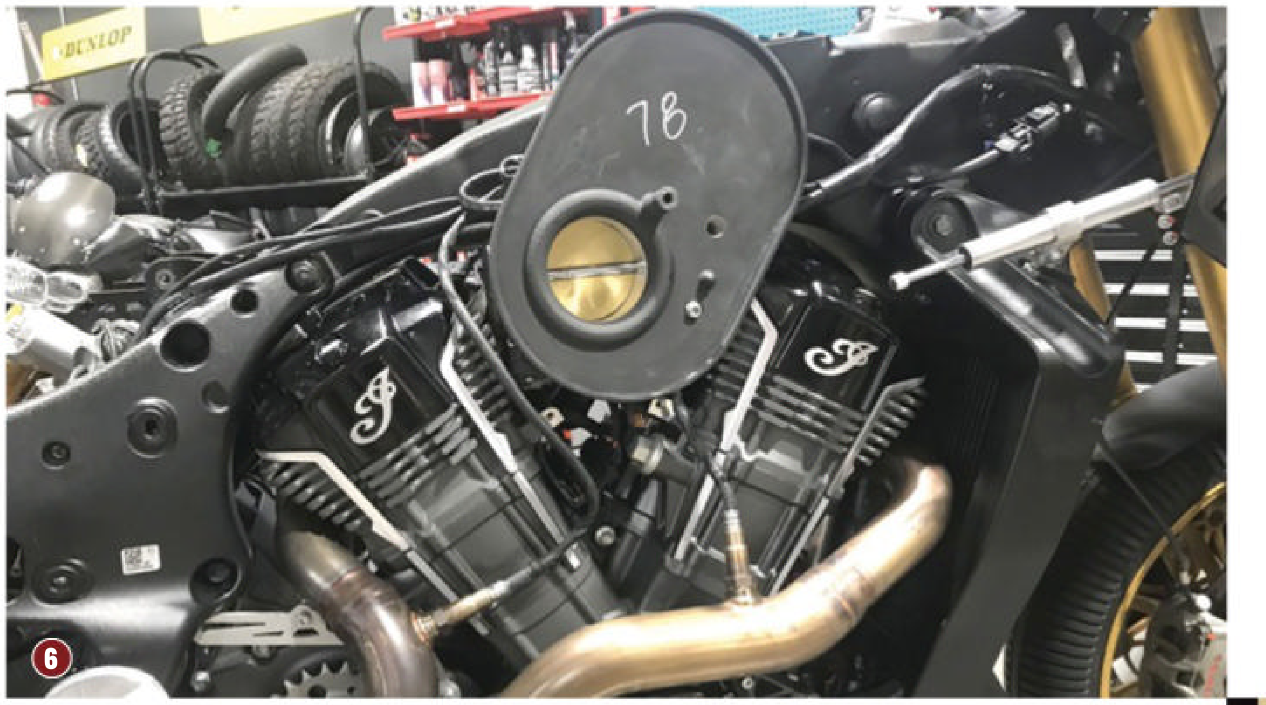
3. Just the basics in the dash department

4. The trick side-mounted induction system, headlined by a 78mm throttle body

5. A neat little power wheelie for the Northern Irishman, WcWilliams

6. Look at that huge spine!





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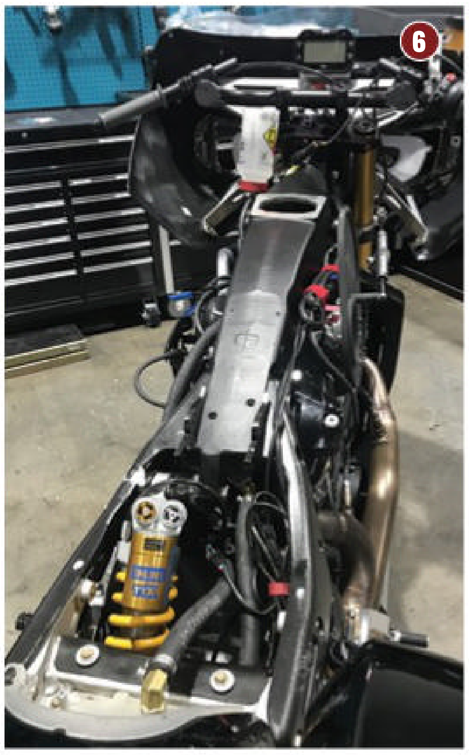
SIDE-MOUNTED INDUCTION WITH A 78MM THROTTLE BODY MADE FOR A CHEVROLET V6 CAR



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this restricted airflow in search of power. This led us to install this throttle body to replace the twin stock oval-section 52mm ones. It's not ideal, since there's a big curve in it that points the throttle body out the side, but it's better than trying to breathe through the stock frame.

"Not using the frame as an airbox means we can stick ballast there – lead bricks fit in perfectly right where the air filter used to be."

And it paid off big time.

"We found about 30hp more for 2022, with the single-bore throttle body part of that horsepower," says Jeff. "So when we went to Daytona last year, we kind of gave Harley a sucker punch, which let us win both races on a power track."

With no rider aids allowed under the rules despite the ride-by-wire throttle – so no traction control on a 200Nm racer – S&S installed a Swedish-made MaxxECU Sport control module with custom wiring harness incorporating a two-way quickshifter, an AIM DL2 dash and data logger.

The stock six-speed gearbox has been retained, but is now matched to what in 2022 was a must-have custom-made Adler slipper clutch – imagine chattering the rear wheel into a turn on this thing! The prototype Adler package worked so well it's been adopted on the 2023 Challenger/Pursuit production bikes – see, racing really does improve the breed! S&S created the clutch cover to aid ground clearance, with the operating lever flipped up to the top side to avoid grounding. Similar concerns made S&S tuck the exhaust in as tight as can be to the engine – it's about halfway up the bike on the right, but incredibly is still a ground clearance issue for the factory riders.

I had no worries this would be an issue for me in my five allotted laps on Jeremy's Daytona-winning bike, especially as it was my first time riding Chuckwalla's flowing but featureless expanses. And the cold temperatures meant we had to run Dunlop Sportmax Q4 street rubber, rather than the usual slicks. Climbing aboard the custom race seat took quite a bit of doing – though this is set quite low, the Indian is pretty wide, thanks to the fuel tank shroud now encompassing the side-mounted throttle body on the right. So I had to lever myself aboard via the incredibly high left footrest, and once installed there I found a really contradictory stance.

You're well aware at all times of just what a vast piece of two-wheeled real estate you've climbed aboard, yet paradoxically the actual riding position is quite cramped, despite the fact that it seemed I had to reach halfway to Mexico to grasp the flat-set clip-ons, while at the same time struggling to lever my feet up high enough to park them on those 'pegs.

Reassuring it's not, even if the 'pegs must be

1. Compared to the production Indian, that's some serious lean angle!
2. Who would have thought Indian's proud racing tradition would eventually include Baggers?
3. The race two podium at Daytona in 2022: (L to R) O'Hara, McWilliams and Fong
4. Sir Al only had five laps to get his head around the Indian Challenger racer - quite the ask
5. A classic Daytona finish, with McWilliams just pipping O'Hara
6. O'Hara and 2021 Baggers champion, Harley's Kyle Wyman

that high to avoid grounding out when Jeremy and Tyler crank their Baggers over to 60° of lean angle, and I could barely touch the ground with the toes of either boot. Once ensconced in the wide, deep-mounted seat, I realised the Bagger's screen merely acts as a wind deflector over the top of the dash. Unlike Harley, Indian has not yet put its Challenger in a wind tunnel, and I think it shows.

Besides acting as a data-logger, this dash shows the gear selected on the left above the engine map chosen, with a digital tacho on the right plus the water temp. Thassit. There are several small switches on the left 'bar, one offering a secondary choice of engine map, another two levels of aggressiveness with the throttle map, another for the pitlane speed limiter, then there's launch control and the fuel pump.

Thumb the starter button and the Indian thunders into life like one of the denizens of the Battle of the Twins class resurfacing from 40-odd years of slumber. Man, this bike sounds purposeful! Notching bottom gear with a clunk on the road-pattern gear change, I tried slipping the clutch lever ready to depart – but then suddenly the Indian leapt forward, and fortunately took me with it!

"The launch control is very, very helpful, and they should have let you use it," said a watching Jeremy afterwards. "It'll only let it rev to 3000rpm, and then we let the clutch out, and it works everything else out for itself. We've seen 0-100km/h times of 2.4 seconds, which is MotoGP territory! So with a long bike, a lot of grip, big hot sticky tyres and a couple of clever EFI guys, we can launch the bike up the road quicker than a factory Superbike. It's so important in this class that you don't get caught up in the midfield."

Noting that at no stage had the long wheelbase Indian wheelied despite the humungous amount of torque I must have inadvertently tapped into,

1

2

3

THE KING OF ALL RIVALRIES

AFTER HARLEY-DAVIDSON finally went racing properly in 1917, the Indian and H-D rivalry blazed into life over the next four decades, then remained dormant for several more after Indian's corporate demise first time around in 1953. Until now, hostilities were confined to the dirt - or on the Murderdrome board tracks.

But after Indian was purchased in 2011 by Polaris and relaunched as a major manufacturer not long after, it returned to America's dirt oval racetracks in 2016 with the FTR750, which has since made the American Flat Track (AFT) series its own in a comparable way to Harley's previous four decades of dirt track dominance with the iconic XR750.

Now that rivalry has been extended to what used to be called pavement racing back in the day, as America's two oldest brands have fought each other to earn bragging rights to road racing's King of the Baggers crown. After a debut exhibition race at Laguna Seca in 2020 was won by Tyler O'Hara aboard Indian's then-new Challenger model, MotoAmerica staged a three-race series as part of its American Superbike race program in 2021.

This was dominated by Harley-Davidson's official Screamin' Eagle Race Team's Kyle Wyman, who wrapped up the championship with two wins and a second place finish on the factory-run Road Glide Special, with Indian's O'Hara finishing second and Hayden Gillim taking third on the Vance & Hines Harley-Davidson Street Glide entry.

4

5

and secretly satisfied I'd caught the engine and hadn't stalled it, I shifted immediately into second, and then almost at once into third via the crisp quickshifter – the bottom four ratios in the gearbox are very close together, with a much bigger gap to fifth and top, as required by the cruiser customer this engine was created to serve. "We're limited on how much we can rev such a high-capacity motor," said Jeremy. "So the ratio spread creates its own little issues when you're trying to find the perfect gearing for a track. After getting off the line we're frequently using third, fourth and fifth gears only in races, especially on faster tracks like Daytona and Road America."

I spent the first two laps trying to come to terms with the curious riding position, as well as that massive torque which I could feel peaked out at around 5500rpm – but then kept on giving right up to the unexpectedly hard-action 7700rpm rev-limiter. Despite its RBW throttle, the MaxxECU enforces a sharp cutout which on such a low-revving engine with such heavy rotational inertia meant each time this happened I lost momentum. This initially made me think I needed to ride the torque curve – logical, you'd think, with so much on offer – but I found the Challenger was washing out the front wheel round long, constant-radius turns if I tried to take these at around 5000-5500rpm, necessitating a good heave to combat the understeer which was bloody hard work on such a long, heavy bike.

> **I SWITCHED STRATEGIES, INSTEAD HOLDING A GEAR LOWER**

So on lap three I switched strategies, instead holding a gear lower and letting the engine rev right out. Bingo! The long wheelbase monsterbike wasn't exactly transformed into a two-wheeled Prince Charming, but it held a tighter line and let me stay hard on the throttle for longer. There are two shift lights – a yellow one at 6900rpm and a final-warning red one 500 revs later, and provided

So, already dominating AFT ever since its 2016 inception, Indian decided to ramp up its Bagger racing involvement, enlisting its partner S&S Cycle to develop a much more highly tuned version of the Challenger racer for O'Hara and his British teammate, veteran former MotoGP racer Jeremy McWilliams, to take it to Harley in 2022.

That born-again Challenger racer made a dominant debut at Daytona's Cycle Week 2022, with O'Hara winning Race 1 ahead of Travis Wyman and brother Kyle who jointly comprised the Harley-Davidson factory team in second and third, with McWilliams fourth on his Bagger baptism. But in Race 2 the following day it was Jeremy's turn to taste victory by a mere 0.025 seconds from O'Hara, with privateer Bobbie Fong making it an Indian 1-2-3 clean sweep of the rostrum.

MOTOR CYCLE

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THAT AMAZING RACE!

6

THE LOOSE HANDLING IS ALL PART OF LIFE'S RICH PASSION

I clicked up immediately as this light fluttered, I'd find myself back in the fat part of the power curve without hitting the limiter, still holding my chosen line. The only downside was that the harder I revved the engine the more it vibrated – not offensively, but still noticeably. Teams aren't allowed to alter the balance shaft, and on the Indian this was obviously no longer weighted correctly after S&S removed so much metal from the crankshaft and fitted the bigger pistons.

Though I can't say in my five-lap taster on a new track I could start to exploit the Indian Bagger's handling capabilities, several features of that were evident after my ride. Firstly, even with the street tyres the chassis likes to wriggle around under the application of all that power and torque, making me glad there was an easy-access steering damper in front of my left knee. Face it, this bike wasn't designed to be raced, so the loose handling is all part of life's rich passion when racing a Bagger – and is undoubtedly one reason it's become a crowd favourite.

Second, although the sense of detachment from the seemingly distant front wheel meant it was hard to feel committed to steering the Indian in turns, it did change direction well, far better than anything this long has a right to do. I wouldn't exactly call it agile, but it was surprisingly adept at taking Chuckwalla's blind left/right hilltop chicane in second gear on a trailing throttle, ready to crack it open descending the hill to get a strong drive out of the right-hander at the bottom, with the engine pulling hard at just under seven grand.

Taking it a gear higher and surfing the torque curve at lower revs had meant it washed out the front-end, and stopped me getting on the power again so quickly.

The Indian also braked well from high speed. The big German-made discs on the McWilliams bike and their Stylema calipers stopped this monolithic motorcycle unexpectedly well – but only if I a) used the rear brake really hard as well; b) used the considerable amount of engine braking on offer; and c) did not try to trailbrake into the apex of a turn, which the Challenger absolutely does not like doing.

"I believe that's happening because it makes more grip than anything else due to the load that it puts to the tyres as we're relying so heavily on backshift and brake," said Jeremy. "So because we've got so much load going through the rear tyre, the bike then tends to get itself crossed up, and starts moving around coming in a bend. Having to adapt your style to riding this bike is quite different to anything else, and it has to be ridden out of your comfort zone."

Yes, indeed – and thing's for sure: anyone who races one of these – Harley or Indian – is a hero. The kind of skill and bravery it takes to get to victory lane cannot be overstated. Respect!

What's not to like about a standard bagger that's been tuned to the hilt, accelerates like no one's business and is both belligerent and beautiful.	PROS AND CONS	It's a loose unit, alright, but that's probably more a positive than a negative - which is why crowds can't get enough! Alright, it vibrates a little.

SPECS

ENGINE
Capacity 1834cc
Type 60º V-twin, SOHC, four valves per cylinder
Bore & stroke 110mm x 96.5mm
Compression ratio 13:1
Cooling Liquid
Fueling EFI, 76mm BBK throttle body
Transmission Six-speed
Clutch Wet, multi-plate, slipper
Final drive Chain

PERFORMANCE
Power 127kW (170hp) @ 7700rpm (claimed)
Torque 203Nm @ 5000rpm (claimed)
Top speed 283km/h (Daytona, 2022)
Fuel consumption Not given

ELECTRONICS
Type Maxx
Rider aids Not applicable
Rider modes Not applicable

CHASSIS
Frame material Cast aluminium
Frame type Backbone
Rake 25º
Trail 114mm
Wheelbase 1640mm

SUSPENSION
Type Öhlins
Front: 48mm upside-down fork, fully adjustable, 170mm travel
Rear: TTX36 monoshock, fully adjustable, travel unknown

WHEELS & BRAKES
Wheels Dymag UP7X forged aluminium
Front: 17 x 3.5 Rear: 17 x 6.0
Tyres Dunlop Sportmax Q4
Front: 130/70-17
Rear: 200/55-17
Brakes Brembo/Hayes
Front: Twin 320mm discs, four-piston Stylema calipers
Rear: Single 268mm disc, four-piston caliper

DIMENSIONS
Weight 283kg (after race) plus 6.8kg ballast
Seat height Not given
Width Not given
Height Not given
Length Not given
Ground clearance Not given
Fuel capacity Not given

SERVICING & WARRANTY
Servicing First: Not given
Minor: Not given
Major: Not given
Warranty Not applicable

BUSINESS END
Price Not applicable
Colour options S&S Indian Racing

CONTACT
Indian Motorcycle International LLC, Medina, Minnesota, USA

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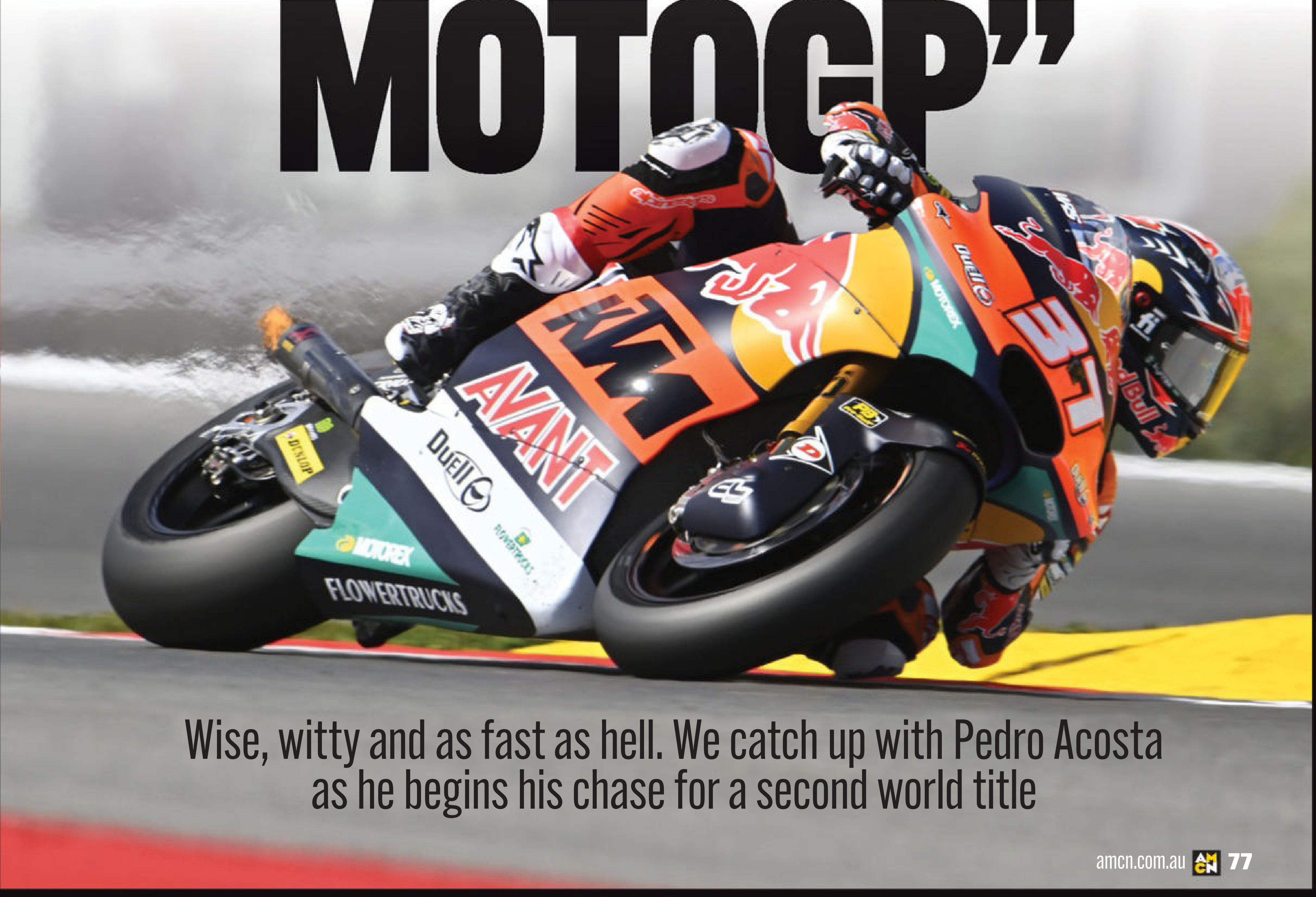
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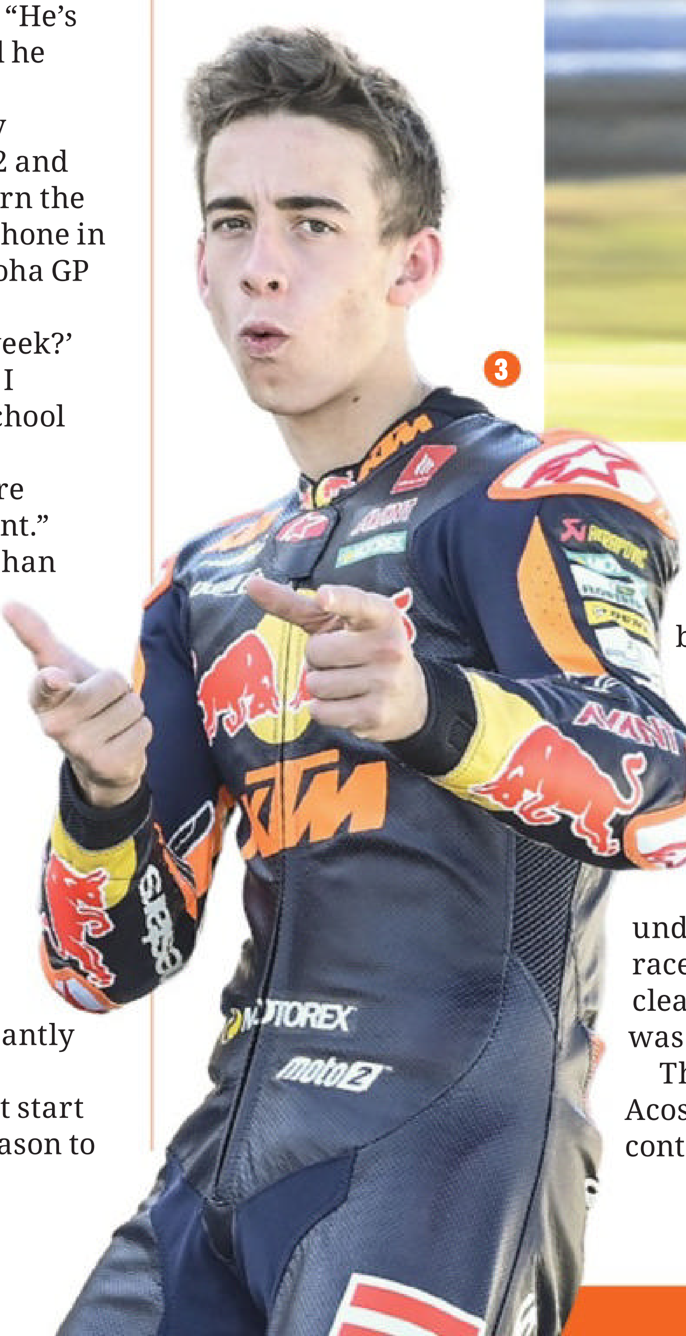
Wise, witty and as fast as hell. We catch up with Pedro Acosta as he begins his chase for a second world title



1. Acosta congratulates then teammate Augusto Fernandez on winning the 2022 Moto2 title

2. Starting off 2023 in a blaze of Moto2 glory at Portimao

3. Playing it Fonzie-cool in this year's preseason test

4. The 2022 Valencia podium: new world champion Fernandez, Acosta and Tony Arbolino

5. Acosta credits team balance and continuity as part of his rich racing success

Pedro Acosta is not your average teenager. That much is clear from the achievements already racked up in a ridiculously short grand prix career. Not just anyone bags their first win in their second-ever grand prix. Nor do they claim the title at their first attempt, at just 17 years and 166 days of age, the second youngest in history. And after starting the year like a house on fire, he's the hands-down favourite to add the Moto2 title to his honours list in 2023.

But in this world, more than achievements are required to really stand out from the crowd. What earmarked Acosta for the very top was the manner in which he achieved the above. It's one thing winning your second-ever race. But doing it when starting from the pitlane? Come on. Likewise, teenagers have won six of the 11 Moto3 titles. But lifting the crown by banging 'bars with your chief rival in the penultimate race just hours after winding him up with a cheeky wave? Again, something out of the ordinary.

There are a few stories that indicate Acosta is wiser than his years. Ahead of a crucial face-off with championship rival Raul Fernandez in the penultimate race of 2021, Remy Gardner received some last-minute words of encouragement from his close pal, then just 17.

"[He told me] 'there are moments that define you, or you define the moment'," Gardner later recalled. "A philosopher and he's like this little kid. I was like, 'Yeah, alright (laughing)'!" As Kevin Schwantz said of his first meeting with the Spaniard: "He's just a kid where you walk in the garage and he pukes confidence."

And there's a reason why he immediately gelled with Aki Ajo's expertly drilled Moto2 and Moto3 set-up. The Finn was delighted to learn the Spaniard had deleted Instagram from his phone in the days after his historic triumph at the Doha GP at the start of 2021.

"I was asking him after 'How was your week?' And he said 'I didn't open social media and I changed my SIM card!' There is some old-school style that I like.

"Sometimes you see some young riders are focusing on the things that are not important." And believe me when I say there are more than a few team bosses across the MotoGP paddock who wish their younger riders could be like this.

That Acosta is destined for the top quickly becomes apparent in conversation. Over two interviews with AMCN – one at the end of 2022, "the hardest" year of his professional life, and a catch-up on the eve of the new season – it's clear the rider from Mazarrón in southern Spain possesses a confidence and maturity that belies his tender age of 18 years.

Not only did his English improve significantly in that time; the assurance that he would eventually make it in Moto2 after a difficult start to life in the class was clear. And there's reason to be confident. Preparation for his second year in the intermediate class couldn't have gone better. Acosta topped both preseason tests at Jerez and Portimao before a convincing victory at the opening round over compatriot and potential chief challenger Aron Canet showcased an ominous level of control.

"[Preseason] was really good," Acosta told AMCN ahead of the round. "We come from the winter with clear ideas. The team has worked so hard to understand what was the difficult points in the races during last season, so we come here with clear ideas where to improve. I have to say it was one of the tests where we worked better."

There are other attributes that mark Acosta out as different from his Moto2 contemporaries. First, his commitment to

Circuit Ricardo Tormo I 2022

4

“LAST YEAR WE STRUGGLED BECAUSE I WAS SO LIGHT. THIS YEAR I AM 3KG HEAVIER, A LITTLE BIGGER WITH THE MUSCLES”

5

having a small group of trusted confidants around him is unwavering. His crew chief Alberto Lotti has remained the same since 2021. As have technicians Francesco Cavalli, Adrian Jiminez and Cesar Ruano, who were also there from the start. The familiarity in the garage helps.

“It’s more to have good confidence with them,” Acosta explained. “Once we go out of the track, we try to talk about other things. Not be 100 percent focused on racing. It’s what this team does different to the others. On Monday [after the test]. we went to the beach, on Tuesday we went karting. Wednesday we were back at work, but we had two days off when we weren’t really thinking about anything in particular.

“I know that everyone has their own problems and it’s nice to talk with someone (about them). On the personal side to have somebody who you feel like a strong friendship and can talk about other things than what happens on the track. Having the same crew chief since 2021, it’s a nice love story! I’m super happy with this team.

“At the beginning of last year they didn’t say anything about my crashes. They really understood this was a process. Also, they give me this calm that I sometimes need.”

And preparation away from the track can’t be faltered. Recognising the opening laps of Moto2 races were a struggle last year, in part caused by a shortage of upper-body strength, Acosta has bulked up for the 2023 season.

“I spent a lot of time in the gym trying to get a little more weight. Last year we struggled because I was so light. This year I arrive three kilos heavier, a little bigger with the muscles and I think this is going to help us in the races. I felt a little small for a Moto2 bike because in the beginning we have a lot of fuel. At the end of the year, we had a better base and it was easier. But we still struggled. Now, we’re a bit faster here. This is going to help us.”

In order to maintain motivation to keep in shape, Acotsa takes a different approach to preparation. Along with fitness coach Paco Mármol, the pair sometimes undergo what they call ‘shock therapy’ – training with a bike which has deliberately been sabotaged, with the clutch taken away. Or the rear brake. Other times, Acosta trains with younger kids, hungry as hell to beat him.

“I try to do different things. From the beginning of last season I saw I was struggling in the rain. So every day that it rained in Murcia I went to train. I didn’t change anything on the bike, the important thing was to get the feeling. We have to do something different every day. When it’s a routine

1. A star has risen: victory in the 2021 Doha Moto3 race, ahead of Binder (left) and Antonelli

2. ... and then victory in the follow-up round at Portimao

3. Acosta's now fully worked out the Moto2 caper, and with more gym-honed muscle he's primed to make it two world titles

4. With current Moto2 teammate Albert Arenas

5. In full flight at round one

6. A happy KTM Moto2 camp at Valencia last year

it's difficult to be focused all the time.

"Training with small bikes, small guys, with kids, they're guys that want to beat you, that don't have this respect that I have with, for example, Remy, when we go training. When you're older you understand what a guy like Remy is fighting for. A kid of nine or 10 years doesn't understand these things. Because of this, I like to go with these younger guys because you learn more from them than training alone. They lose this respect and you have to fight for it."

So, training trumps selfies and Instagram posts?

"I don't really like it," he said. "Social media can put you in the highest point or the lowest point. I understand it's like a switch. When you're young, people follow you. I don't know how many followers I have, but there are only four or five people in my close group. They are the really important people I have. It's more like football – people are more focused on rider, rather than enjoying the racing. The guys here have to understand the important thing is what your close people around you think; not what the media thinks."

Known as *El Tiburon de Mazarrón* (the shark from Mazarrón, his hometown), this work ethic has honed what has always been a distinctive riding style.

"You can see he has really strong entry in the corners that makes him a really good race rider," Ajo told me back in 2021. "He has really good confidence in entry, in both front and rear. He can turn and stop the bike really quickly. Riding styles are changing time-by-time and Pedro again brings something new to what even some MotoGP riders are looking for, and see clearly that there is something special."

Not that his two-and-a-bit years in the World Championship have all been plain sailing. This time a year ago, Acosta underwent something of a humbling experience in his early days as a Moto2 rider. Fast through preseason, he entered the first race as the bookies' favourite to claim the title – as an 18-year-old rookie. Yet even for a rider of Acosta's talents, this was a season too early. He failed to score points in four of the first seven races. And frustrations boiled over with his team after a careless crash in Argentina when he railed the team for not letting him ride the bike as he felt best; a rare break from singing their praises.

Suddenly, Acosta saw what it was like when results weren't going well. The Spanish media spotlight that was ever-present through 2021 was turned elsewhere, something that appeared to irk the rider from Murcia.

"In (2021) everybody talked about Pedro Acosta. But in 2022 when I didn't do good results nobody was talking. This made me understand the media are going to say the best thing for the media, not for you.

"It was important to have this step back. There was a time (in 2021) that, apart from Marc's injury, all of Spain was talking about me. It was like when Fernando Alonso won the F1 World Championship. It was important to have this moment to step back and realise what last year was for me.

"It's better it was before I go to MotoGP. If you don't have these difficult moments, you don't enjoy the good ones so much."

In reality, he was experiencing common teething problems that every Moto2 rookie had encountered before.

"In Moto3 I didn't have a problem when I qualified 25th. I knew I was going to arrive to the leading group. The problem here is if you start

"PEDRO AGAIN BRINGS SOMETHING NEW TO WHAT EVEN SOME MOTOGP RIDERS ARE LOOKING FOR"

the race in eighth, you lose three laps overtaking. You have to understand the electronics, tyre management and you have to be more conscious about what you're doing."

Soon a compromise was found with the team regarding set-up and riding style, and the good times were back. By round seven, with just 20 points to his name, it clicked.

"I was thinking in one way, the team were thinking in another," he said of that time. "Maybe we lost the correct way in the beginning of last season. I knew I had to try things that the team recommended to improve and the team understood they had to give me other things to go fast – it was 50-50."

There was a pole position in France, where he crashed out of the lead. Not to worry as he won next time out at Mugello, becoming, at 18 years and four days of age, the youngest rider in history to claim a victory in GP's intermediate class, bettering Marquez's previous record, by 83 days. And aside from breaking his left femur when motocross riding last June, ruling him out of two races, Acosta was always fighting for the top six.

"Since Le Mans and my victory at Mugello, I was fast. I broke the lap record in Le Mans. Okay, I crashed but I was leading a race, I was pushing so it was a crash I understood. In Mugello we were fast all weekend. Barcelona was a hard weekend for us because it's a track where I always struggle. We still managed to finish in the top six. Then in the Sachsenring we took a podium.

"Assen and Silverstone we didn't ride. But we returned to Austria with P4, P6 in Misano and

4

5

6

we won in Aragon. The first races overseas were tricky, the weather and everything. But P6 again at Motegi. We struggled a lot in the rain but we found a way where we are always finishing races and improving a bit."

It resulted in three wins in 2022, fifth in the championship and the coveted Rookie of the Year gong – not a bad return seeing he missed two races, and was affected by the leg injury long after his return in August. But could he have fought for the title had it not been for the training injury?

"We cannot change the past. We have to take the mistakes we do and improve on them."

Those experiences in his Moto2 rookie campaign will stand him in good stead for 2023, not least as he saw what last year's teammate Augusto Fernandez went on to achieve. "I learned from this last season when I saw Augusto was world champion," Acosta said. "I remember when we arrived to Le Mans we were joking: 'Maybe at the Sachsenring we'll be in the tents because we won't have enough points to go to the box' (tents are reserved for Moto2/3 teams in lower championship positions, the better-placed have garages). F***'.

"Then you see four months later he was world champion. I learnt we have to be calm if we don't start like we want, because if we are constant and fast at all the tracks we can be competitive."

If Acosta keeps his current run of form going, KTM bosses will have several sleepless nights when working out where to place their current golden boy next year. Factory men Brad Binder and Jack Miller, as well as GaGas Tech3's Pol Espargaro, have two-year deals with the Austrian factory. And Augusto Fernandez is still only a rookie. But losing Acosta would be unthinkable for the Austrians. Does Acosta see MotoGP in 2024 as the next natural step?

"The target is to keep this way in 2023. We're always in the top six. Maybe in 2024 it's the moment [to go to MotoGP]. First, we have to be 100 percent competitive like Remy was [in 2021] to say, 'I'm ready.' Like I always say, going to MotoGP in a factory team with a two-year contract is sweet. Your dream is to go there.

"I think it's not the way if you're not going to fight. You can win a Moto3, Moto2 Championship, but the real target is to prepare for MotoGP. If you're not prepared, there's no point in going."

And that begs the question: if he was to rise to the premier class, for which factory would he ride? Other manufacturers will no doubt be interested. So does Acosta feel a sense of loyalty to the Austrian marque?

"When I didn't have a team in Moto3, they found me a team," he said, referencing KTM's decision to place him in Ajo's team for 2021 when a previous deal had fallen through. "Last year when I had a two-year contract in Moto3, they broke it and took me up to Moto2. They're the people that have given me everything. Because of this, I believe KTM are going to do a step up. I believe it."

1. Canet kept Acosta in sight for the entire Moto2 race at Portimao

2. The round one podium: (L to R) Canet, Acosta and Arbolino

3. Where will Acosta end up in MotoGP? There'll be a few suitors...

IF ACOSTA KEEPS HIS CURRENT FORM GOING, KTM BOSSES WILL HAVE SEVERAL SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

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TOP THREE TV

① 2023 MotoGP, Rd3, LIVE

Fox Sports, Kayo & Video Pass

14-16 APRIL

Check website and local guides

The MotoGP caravan heads to the notoriously bumpy Circuit of the Americas layout in Texas, with a double long-lap penalty already awaiting track specialist Marc Marquez...

② 2023 WorldSBK, Rd3, LIVE

Fox Sports

21-23 APRIL

Check website and local guides

The start of the championship has been dominated by Alvaro Bautista, but the start of European leg will certainly bring the on-track action closer together - and watch out for Aussie Remy Gardner on the Yamaha.

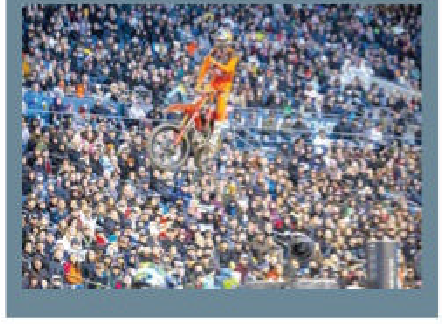
③ 2023 AMA SX, Rds 13/14, LIVE

Fox Sports, Kayo & Video Pass

16/23 APRIL

Check website and local guides

As the series goes down to the wire, the margin for error for the top runners in the 450cc and 250cc classes - including Aussie siblings Jett and Hunter Lawrence in the 250s - is minimal. The racing will be red hot!



RACING WHERE & WHEN

ROAD RACING

2023 MOTOGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd3	16 Apr, Austin, US
Rd4	30 Apr, Jerez, ES
Rd5	14 May, Le Mans, FR
Rd6	11 Jun, Mugello, IT
Rd7	18 Jun, Sachsenring, DE
Rd8	25 Jun, Assen, NL
Rd9	9 Jul, Sokol, KZ
Rd10	6 Aug, Silverstone, GB
Rd11	20 Aug, Spielberg, AT
Rd12	3 Sep, Barcelona, ES
Rd13	10 Sep, Misano, IT
Rd14	24 Sep, Buddh, IN
Rd15	1 Oct, Motegi, JN
Rd16	15 Oct, Mandalika, ID
Rd17	22 Oct, Phillip Island, AU
Rd18	29 Oct, Buriram, TH
Rd19	12 Nov, Sepang, MY
Rd20	19 Nov, Losail, QA
Rd21	26 Nov, Valencia, ES

2023 AUSTRALIAN SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd3	28-30 Apr, Queensland Raceway, Qld
Rd4	16-18 Jun, Hidden Valley, NT
Rd5	14-16 Jul, Morgan Park Raceway, Qld
Rd6	27-29 Oct, Phillip Island, Vic
Rd7	1-3 Dec, The Bend, SA

2023 SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd3	21-23 Apr, Assen, NL
Rd4	5-7 May, Barcelona, ES
Rd5	2-4 Jun, Misano, IT
Rd6	30 Jun-2 Jul, Donington Park, GB
Rd7	28-20 Jul, Most, CZ
Rd8	8-10 Sep, Magny-Cours, FR
Rd9	22-24 Sep, Aragon, ES
Rd10	29-Sep-1 Oct, Portimao, PT
Rd11	13-15 Oct, San Juan, AR
Rd12	TBA

2023 BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd2	30 Apr-1 May, Oulton Park, CHS
Rd3	20-21 May, Donington Park, LCE
Rd4	17-18 Jun, Knockhill, FIF
Rd5	8-9 Jul, Snetterton, NFK
Rd6	22-23 Jul, Brands Hatch (GP), KEN
Rd7	12-13 Aug, Thruxton, HAM
Rd8	27-28 Aug, Cadwell Park, LIN
Rd9	16-17 Sep, Oulton Park, CHS
Rd10	30 Sep-1 Oct, Donington Park (GP), LCE
Rd11	14-15 Oct, Brands Hatch (GP), KEN

OFF-ROAD RACING

2023 AUSTRALIAN HARD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd2	13-14 May, 'Mother of Mayhem', Vic
Rd3	24-25 Jun, 'Ironstone Extreme', Qld
Rd4	12-13 Aug, 'Hillstorm Challenge', NSW
Rd5	7-8 Oct, 'Goldfields Extreme', Qld

2023 AUSTRALIAN OFF-ROAD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rds3/4	22-23 Apr, Queensland Moto Park, Qld
Rds5/6	22-23 Jul, Edenhope, Vic
Rds7/8	26-27 Aug, Keyneton, SA
Rds9/10	16-17 Sep, Kyogle, NSW
Rds11/12	14-15 Oct, Dungog, Qld

2023 AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR MX CHAMPIONSHIP

11-16 Jul, Alice Springs, NT

2023 FINKE DESERT RACE

9-12 Jun, Alice Springs, NT

2023 HATTAH DESERT RACE

30 Jun-2 Jul, Hattah, Vic

2023 AUSTRALIAN JNR. DIRT TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP

15-16 Jul, Barleigh Ranch, NSW

2023 AUSTRALIAN SNR DIRT TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP

7-8 Oct, Diamond Park, Vic

2023 AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP

15-16 Apr, Arundel, Qld

2023 AUSTRALIAN SENIOR TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP

28-29 Oct, Barleigh Ranch, NSW

2023 AUSTRALIAN FLAT TRACK NATIONALS

Rds1/2	1-2 Jul, Appin, NSW
Rds3/4	16-17 Sep, Brisbane, Qld
Rds5/6	11-12 Nov, Taree, NSW

2023 AMA SX

Rd13	16 Apr, Atlanta, GA
Rd14	23 Apr, East Rutherford, NJ
Rd15	30 Apr, Nashville, TN
Rd16	7 May, Denver, CO
Rd17	14 May, Salt Lake City, UT

2023 WSX

Rd1	1 Jul, Birmingham, GB
Rd2	22 Jul, Lyon, FR
Rd3	30 Sep, TBA, SE Asia
Rd4	14 Oct, Dusseldorf, DE
Rd5	28 Oct, Vancouver, CA
Rd6	24-25 Nov, Melbourne, AU

2023 MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd4	16 Apr, Pietramurata, IT
Rd5	30 Apr, Agueda, PT
Rd6	7 May, Arroyomolinos, ES
Rd7	21 May, Villars sous Ecot, FR
Rd8	4 Jun, Kegums, LV
Rd9	11 Jun, Teutschenthal, DE
Rd10	25 Jun, Sumbawa, ID
Rd11	2 Jul, Lombok, ID
Rd12	16 Jul, Loket, CZ
Rd13	23 Jul, Lommel, BE
Rd14	30 Jul, Hyvinkaa, FI
Rd15	13 Aug, Uddevalla, SE
Rd16	20 Aug, Arnhem, NL
Rd17	3 Sep, Afyonkarahisar, TR
Rd18	17 Sep, Thanh Hoa, VN
Rd19	15 Oct, Matterley Basin, GB

2023 MOTOCROSS OF NATIONS

22 Oct, Ernee, FR

2023 JUNIOR MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

9Jul, Bucharest, RO

2023 ENDUROGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP*

Rd1	31 Mar-2 Apr, San Remo, IT
Rd2	5-7 May, Lalin, ES
Rd3	26-28 May, Heinola, FI
Rd4	1-3 Jun, Skövde, SE
Rd5	30 Jun-2 Jul, Gelnica, SK
Rd6	7-9 Jul, TBA
Rd7	29 Sep-1 Oct, Valpaços, PT
Rd8	6-8 Oct, St Andre, PT

2023 HARD ENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd1	17-20 May, XCross, RS
Rd2	8-11 Jun, Erzbergrodeo, AT
Rd3	7-9 Jul, Abestone, IT
Rd4	25-29 Jul, Romaniacs, RO
Rd5	26-27 Aug, Outliers, CA
Rd6	28-20 Sep, Roof of Africa, LS
Rd7	3-4 Nov, GetZen Rodeo, DE

2023 SPEEDWAY GRAND PRIX

Rd1	29 Apr, Donji Kraljevec, HR
Rd2	13 May, Warsaw, PL
Rd3	3 Jun, Prague, CZ
Rd4	10 Jun, Teterow, DE
Rd5	24 Jun, Gorzow, PL
Rd6	23 July, Malilla, SE
Rd7	12 Aug, Riga, LV
Rd8	2 Sep, Cardiff, GB
Rd9	16 Sep, Vojens, DK
Rd10	30 Sep, Torun, PL

2023 TRIAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd1	14-16 Apr, Arteixo, ES
Rd2	21-23 Apr, Gouveia, PT
Rd3	19-21 May, Motegi, JP
Rd4	09-11 Jun, Baldasserrona, SM
Rd5	16-18 Jun, Sant Julià de Lòria, AD
Rd6	21-23 Jul, Sestriere, IT
Rd7	01-03 Sep, Vertolaye, FR

2023 WOMEN'S TRIAL WORLD CHMPIONSHIP

Rd1	14-16 Apr, Arteixo ES
Rd2	21-23 Apr, Gouveia, PT
Rd3	19-21 May, Motegi, JP
Rd4	21-23 Jul, Sestriere, IT
Rd5	1-3 Sep, Vertolay, FR

RIDE DAYS & SCHOOLS

Phillip Island Ride Days / 0490 281 840
Phillip Island, Vic

Sydney Motorsport Park Ride Days/0490 281 840
SMSP, NSW

Murray Valley Training Co 0459 415 787
Barnawartha North, Vic

Champion's Ride Days (07) 3287 4144
Broadford, Vic
Collie Motorplex, WA
Morgan Park, Qld
The Bend, SA

Trakdayz 0401 484 898
Barbagallo, WA

California Superbike School / 1300 793 423
Phillip Island, Vic
SMSP, NSW
Broadford, Vic
Morgan Park Qld

Mount Gambier MCC Coaching / Ride Days 0448 951 163
Mac Park, SA

Ride-Tek MTA 1300 788 382
Sandown, Vic

Ridedays WA (08) 9409 1002
Barbagallo, WA
Collie, WA

Top Rider 1300 131 362
Various venues, Qld

Phoenix MCC Junior Coaching 0403 386 788
Tailem Bend, SA
Mallala, SA

RALLIES & SHOWS

16 APRIL 2023

Mirboo North Motorcycle Swap Meet Castle Street Oval, Mirboo North (Vic). Coffee and barbecue on site, and entry is $10 per person. Gates open at 6:30am for set up. For more information on the bi-annual event phone 0428 684 267, look up 'mirboo north motorcycle show' on Facebook or email mirboo.n.motorcycle.show@outlook.com.

6 MAY 2023

Dubbo Motorbike Rally Dubbo, NSW. From Harleys to Hondas, Buells to Beemers and Piaggios to posties – all bikes and riders welcome. The event will be held in Talbragar Street from 9am to 4pm (you can park in 'Bike Street' any time, for as long as you like, during this period). Just don't leave your ride at the motel, as everyone else wants to see it too! There will be stalls, entertainment, local rides and much more. For more information see the event website at dubbomotorbikerally.com.

6-7 MAY 2023

Gloucester Motorcycle Expo, Gloucester Showground, Gloucester, NSW. Vintage MX racing, show 'n' shine, dealer displays, swap meet, prizes, bar facilities, cafe, free camping, hot showers, food, firewood and live music Saturday night. Entry $20 adults, $40 family and U16 free. For more information phone Peter Markey on 0418 633 060 or Sam DeWitte on 0417 656 201.

7 MAY 2023

The Berry Bike Show, Berry Bowling Club, NSW. Trophies, stalls, raffles, sausage sizzle. Registration 8.30am-midday, judging 12.30pm. Entry $5 per bike, public entry gold coin donation. Judging categories: Classic European, Classic British, Classic Asian, Classic American, Modified, Ladies, Kids, Modern, Dirt/Trail Bike, Sidecar, Oldest Bike, Unrestored, Bike of The Show.

18-21 MAY 2023

The 37th Bike Fest International, Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy. The BFI has many attractions: a 7km area for off-road activities, moto tours, demo rides, rock music, cuisines galore, custom machines, a custom show, and a massive parade. Entry is free. For more information, visit the 'Biker Fest International' Facebook site.

20-21 MAY 2023

Great Southern Adventure Rally, Hallett, SA (north of Adelaide). Start at 10.30am; stands up at 11.30am. An adventure event focused on fun and teamwork. Anyone on a street-legal bike over 150cc can join in on the action. Teams of at least two, but you are welcome to join up with any other teams on the day. One Twitter account required per team, bring water. For details and registration visit www.greatsouthernadventurerally.com.au.

27-28 MAY 2023

Historic Winton, Winton, Vic. The 46th car and motorcycle event will be held in its usual spectacular style with races, displays, trade stalls, a Sunday parade and delicious food. Camping tickets are available at the website www.ticketebo.com.au/historicwinton. For the latest Historic Winton news visit www.historicwinton.org or follow on Facebook or Instagram @historicwinton.

7-11 JUNE 2023

Bike Fest Oz! in Coolangatta and surrounds is shaping up to be Australia's version of Sturgis or Daytona Bike Week. Events include the Rolling Thunder Parade, poker run, beach rides, opening ball and a concert and party. Early-bird packages are available for $500 and get you into the Thunder Parade, guaranteed access to the accomodation packages and other limited ticketed events, a tourist info pack, a T-shirt and a bumper sticker. For more information check out bikefestoz.com.au.

11 JUNE 2023

Border Swap Meet, Tweed Heads, NSW. To be held at Recreation Street Park in Florence Street. Gates open for vendors at 5am. For details shoot an email through to contactsecretary.thmcec@gmail.com or call the club on 0404 222 422.

23-25 JUNE 2023

Casper Rally, on the Abercrombie River at the Bummaroo Ford Camping Ground in NSW. The rally site is located approximately 72km north of Goulburn and 75km south of Oberon. BYO drinks, food and cooking gear. Toilet facilities on site with drinking water and firewood provided. Raffle and awards Saturday afternoon. Entry is $20 and includes a badge and raffle ticket. Enquiries: Andy 0437 608 440 or Dieter 0417 616 199.

24 JUNE 2023

All Bike Day, Tweed Heads, NSW. Willowbank Raceway, Qld. For all skill levels, in classes from LAMS to cruisers to full-spec modified bikes. It is run on a 'dial your own' format. Entries will be online through the Willowbank Raceway website about a month before the race date. Contact Marty Armstrong on 0424 134 904 for more information.

16 JULY 2023

Club Laverda Councours, Redland Showgrounds, Cleveland, Qld. A static motorcycle display with 60 trophies and $2000 for the best machine. Alcohol-free family day raising funds for the Make a Wish Foundation. A $10 gate fee applies to patrons over 15 years and includes on-site motorcycle parking. Entertainment includes free face painting and kids' rides; wide variety of food vendors. For information call 0404 540 617 or email concours@clublaverdaqld.com.au.

26-28 AUGUST 2023

TTT Rally, follow red and white TTT signs 10km north of Taralga, NSW. An overnight ride, with camping and a huge bonfire. BYO everything else. Badge $25 on the day. The TTT Rally (Thrashers Terrifying Trek) is a favourite of the Clubman Tourers. For details visit www.clubman.org.au.

8-10 SEPTEMBER 2023

Ragged Fringe Rally, Bretti Reserve, NSW. Annual rally for the Moto Guzzi Club NSW. Firewood will be provided by the club and rally badges and T-shirts will be available for purchase. Entry fee is $30. The rally officially starts on Saturday morning however many choose to arrive on the Friday. There will be a number of meeting points for group rides to the rally on either day. See www.mgoa.org.

19 SEPTEMBER 2023

31st Annual Border Poker Run Tweed Heads, NSW. All makes and models welcome. Make sure you keep an eye on the 'Tweed Heads Motorcycle Enthusiasts Club' Facebook page as more information comes to hand.

22-24 SEPTEMBER 2023

Harley-Davidson National HOG Rally, The Bend Motorsport Park, Tailem Bend, SA. Highlights will include night drags, bagger racing, private track sessions, a chapter parade and test-ride sessions. There will be live music, interactive tech displays, chapter games, guided rides and a host of vendors. The event marks the pinnacle of year-long celebrations as the brand commemorates 120 years and 40 years of HOG in Australia. For information and ticketing see www.hog120.com or socials at @harleyaustralia.

27-29 OCTOBER 2023

Spaghetti Rally Edi Cutting (South) campsite in the beautiful King Valley, not far from Whitfield, Vic. Spit roast available Friday night, egg and bacon rolls Saturday and Sunday mornings, and the Spaghetti dinner on Saturday night is included in entry fee. The usual trophies and awards after the motorcycle trivia quiz. Hosted by Moto Guzzi Club of Victoria. For more information: johnferguson@iinet.net.au or call 0408 32 0511.

3-9 NOVEMBER 2023

BSA Motorcycle International Rally in Harndorf, SA. Six days of good company, great riding with panoramic views of beautiful countryside, as well as superb local produce included in all meals. A fun way to get together like-minded people who have an interest in firing up their British motorcycles, and also to catch up with old and new friends in a relaxed atmosphere. See www.bsainternationalrally2023.com.

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BELL BROOZER

BAD ASS BRAIN BUCKET

Want a cruiser lid but without the bugs in your teeth? The Bell Broozer fits the bill

I'm not a big fan of open-face helmets. Apart from the fact that I look ridiculous in them, when you ride day-in day-out in all weather conditions, there's the sunburn, cold weather, rain, insects and safety issues to consider. And so I've always ridden cruisers in either full-face helmets or, in recent history, open-face helmets with a clip-on chin bar such as the Bell Broozer that has just arrived.

The Broozer has a polycarbonate ABS shell and there are three shell sizes available, so riders with small noggins don't look like they are wearing a bowling ball. The chin bar clips in firmly, but you can also remove it completely so you can run the classic open-face helmet look. The chin bar is obviously not a structural part of the Broozer so it's there for the look and protection from the elements and flying debris rather than stopping your chin being ripped off in the event of a prang.

The Broozer has a dual-density EPS liner, it is DOT- and ECE-approved and sports an anti-fog and scratch-resistant clear visor that is included in the box. There is also a dark tint visor available, as well as a silver iridium visor which I've fitted to my lid.

There are two large vents on the Broozer: a chin one and another on the top that can be closed. I've only ripped out one ride in the Broozer but already I can tell you the venting is far, far better than in my last cruiser helmet. I used the Broozer on the recent Aussie launch of Harley-Davidson's 2023 Breakout in Bright, Victoria. The mornings were cold and the days warm and I had to close the vents in the morning – the vents really do pump some air into the helmet, which is very welcome when it warms up.

Considering the style of helmet, it's reasonably quiet while rumbling along and I could still listen to music or take calls on my Cardo communication system without having issues hearing.

Another thing I like is that I can comfortably fit my sunnies in the Broozer, which is especially important if you wear eye glasses so you can see.

The fit is snug and comfortable and, even though I've only had one major adventure with the Broozer, that ride did go all day and it was comfortable for the whole duration.

The Broozer's liner is removable and washable which is a bonus once it starts getting manky. It's also easy to remove and refit. There's a rachet-style buckle so it's super easy to get in and out of, and it's not one of those helmets that tears your ears off when you take it off or put it on.

It's early days with the Broozer, but so far I'm super impressed and can honestly say it's the most comfortable and quiet helmet of this style that I've had. The venting is excellent, and I reckon it looks damn good as well, especially with the optional iridium visor.

PETE VORST

JUST ARRIVED

Bell Broozer

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RING LEADER

My Ixon RS Ring short gloves have had a hard life. I've only had them for a bit over 12 months but already they have travelled with me over many thousands of kays. I would say they are on my hands for at least 95 percent of my riding time, which in this game is substantial.

The glove is a full-leather design with hard-knuckle protection, elasticated single Velcro wrist closure, and Ixon's Anti-Twist system which consists of stitching the pinkie finger and ring finger together.

There's PU protection on the heel of the palm and on both the ring and the up-yours fingers as well.

Despite the extensive use over the last year, the only sign of wear is the deterioration of the finish on some of the fingers, especially on the forefingers and thumbs.

Apart from that there's no signs of stitching separation, even around the base of the wrist which I've found to be a common thing with short gloves in the past.

So far, I'm very happy with the RS Ring's durability, and overall comfort, however there is one area that could use some improvement - and that's ventilation.

The extent of the ventilation system on the Ring is a small section of perforated leather on the extremities of the pinkie and ring finger, and another section under the wrist strap.

Overall though, I'm very happy with the RS Ring. They feel solid and protective even after many, many thousands of kilometres of use.

PV

CRYSTAL MOTO WASH

DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

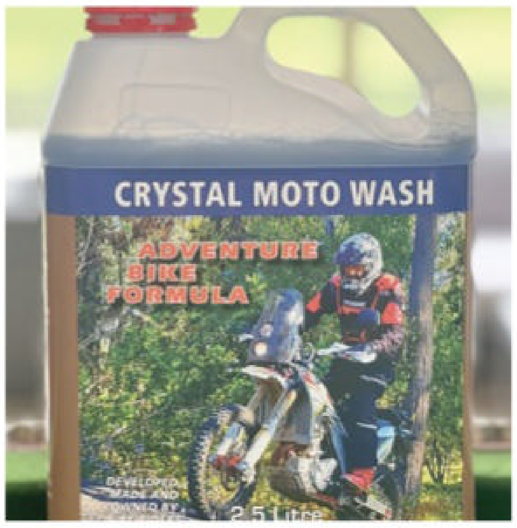
Crystal Bike Wash is an Australian-made product from Crystal Paints in Brisbane, Queensland. There are three formulas - Road, Adventure and Dirt - all available in a 2.5-litre drum for the very reasonable price of $29.

All three are biodegradable, but as the ingredients aren't listed I can't tell you what the difference is except the colour. Crystal Paints says that each is a specific formula ideal for cleaning a particular style of bike, with the adventure wash a combination of both the roadbike and dirtbike mixes.

I've only used the road formula once, so I'll be testing it and the other two formulas over the next few months on all the rigs that come through the AMCN garage. Using it is fairly similar to most bike washes: mix one part Crystal Moto Wash with three parts water, apply to your dirty ride and wash off after five minutes. The Crystal web also mentions that you can leave the wash on longer if you have really nasty mud stains on your dirtbike, but doesn't advise this for its adventure or roadbike washes.

CRYSTAL MOTO WASH
ROAD BIKE FORMULA
DEVELOPED MADE AND OWNED BY BIKE RIDERS
2.5 Litre

CRYSTAL MOTO WASH
CRYSTAL MOTO WASH
CRYSTAL MOTO WASH



My first wash was of our departing long-term Harley-Davidson Fat Bob. Bob had some road grime and a few bugs but wasn't particularly dirty. The Crystal wash did a reasonable job but I'm not sure Fat Bob rolled out any cleaner than when I use a sponge and washing-up detergent. And when it comes to grimy bits like brake calipers, so far it isn't a match for the MotoMuck I was using before.

It is early days though and I'll experiment with leaving the wash on the harder-to-clean parts a bit longer to see if that works. As for the other formulas, well I know the adventure bike wash is going to get a very thorough workout when the bikes arrive for our annual adventure bike comparo which is coming soon.

PV

JUST ARRIVED

Crystal Moto Wash
$29
Available in
Road, Adventure and dirt bike formulas
Crystal Paints

www.crystalpaints.com.au
☎ (07) 3341 3566

1

2

06 THINGS YOU NEED

1 RIDE COMMANDER

Moto National

$699.95

☎ 1300 885 355

airoh.motonational.com.au

The Airoh Commander helmet features a composite shell construction with two shell sizes employed for a custom fit. The Commander features an extra-wide visor with integrated Pinlock lens, a three-point ventilation system, aerodynamic peak, retractable sun visor and a removable and washable hypoallergenic liner.

2 RIDE THE CHOOB

Andy Strapz

From $28

☎ (03) 9786 3445

andystrapz.com

The Choob neck tube from Andy Strapz boasts a 18.5-micron, super-fine merino wool construction that is claimed to be non-stink, non-itch and moisture wicking. The Choob is also fire-retardant, bio-degradable, light, easily washable, fast drying and, most importantly, made in Australia.

3 BACK TO BASE

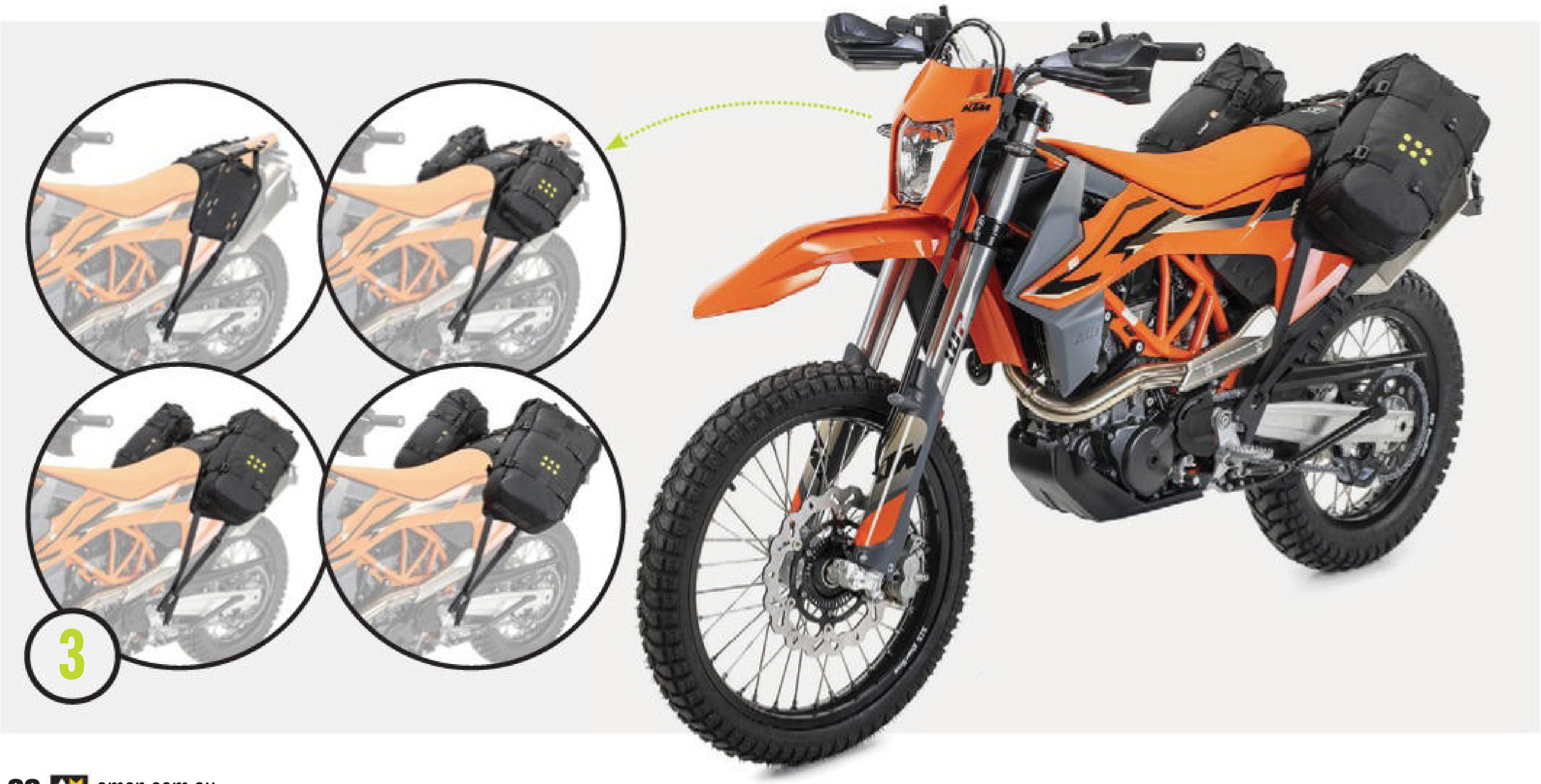
Kriega Australia

From $315

☎ 0409 959 737

kriega.com.au

Kriega's 700 OS-Base is an 'over the seat harness' for mounting Kriega's waterproof OS-6, OS-12 or OS-18 adventure packs as soft panniers to the KTM 690, Husqvarna 701 and GasGas 700. The OS Base features a Hypalon construction and is supplied with fitting hardware allowing the flexibility to mount a one, two or three-pack setup.



3

RAGNAR
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RAGNAR
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ANTITWIST
ADVENTURE SERIES
4

④ WINTER DIGITS

Cassons Australia

From $189.95

☎ (02) 8882 1900

cassonsmedia.com

Ixon's Pro Ragnar is a CE-certified winter glove with Cordura and goat leather outer construction with extra protection provided by a TPU knuckle protection and a reinforced palm. A Primaloft and fleece inner liner keep your hands warm and dry, while inner cuff and double strap closure keeps the glove secure.

⑤ BIKE BLANKET

Link International

$59.90

☎ (07) 3382 5000

linkint.com.au

LA Corsa's waterproof and lined motorcycle cover is made of 250g PVC and cotton that is non-abrasive, mildew-resistant and lightweight. The cover utilises double-stitched interlock seams, has a windproof-securing buckle, comes with a storage bag, and is available in sizes S-XXL.

⑥ 2 INFINITY AND BEYOND

Whites Powersports

From $569

☎ (03) 8720 6000

whitesmoto.com.au

The Richa Infinity 2 jacket is an all-seasons design that boasts a Cordura outer with abrasion-resistant mesh and D30 impact protection in the shoulders, elbows and back. Optional chest protection is available. The Infinity has Richa's AVS ventilation system, waterproof liner and removable thermal liner.

6
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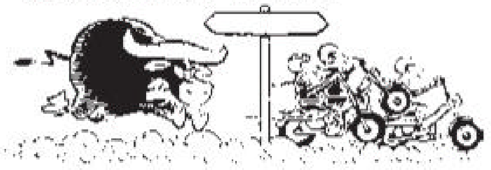
Postie Bike CHALLENGE



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2-13 Sep 2023

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www.postiebikechallenge.org Ph. 0411 090 891

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0409 959 737

BUYER'S GUIDE. A-Z OF NEW BIKE PRICES

APRILIA aprilia.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
SR GT 125	$7440	✓
SR GT 125 Sport	$7540	✓
RS 660	$21,230	✓
RS 660 LAMS	$20,830	✓
Tuono 660	$20,430	✗
Tuono 660 LAMS	$20,530	✓
Tuareg 660	$22,230	✗
Tuareg 660 LAMS	$22,230	✓
Tuono V4	$28,830	✗
Tuono Factory	$33,330	✗
RSV4	$31,830	✗
RSV4 Factory	$38,930	✗

BENELLI benelli.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
TnT 135 CBS	$4590	✓
TRK 502	$9990	✓
TRK 502X	$10,690	✓
Leoncino 500	$9890	✓
Leoncino 500 Trail	$10,390	✓
Leoncino 800	$13,490	✗
Leoncino 800 Trail	$13,990	✗
502C	$10,590	✓
752S	$12,990	✗
TNT 600i	$11,790	✓

BETA betamotor.com.au

Plus on-road costs

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
RR 125 2T	$12,295	✓
RR 200 2T	$13,395	✓
RR 250 2T	$13,595	✓
RR 300 2T	$14,395	✓
RR 350 4T EFI	$14,195	✓
RR 390 4T EFI	$14,495	✓
RR 430 4T EFI	$14,695	✓
RR 480 4T EFI	$14,995	✓
X-Trainer 250 2T	$11,195	✓
X-Trainer 300 2T	$11,495	✓

BMW bmwmotorrad.com.au

Plus on-road costs (from August 2022 production)

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
F 900 XR	$18,670	✗
F 900 R	$15,320	✗
S 1000 XR	$29,780	✗
M 1000 RR	$52,440	✗
S 1000 RR	$25,750	✗
R 1250 RS	$27,240	✗
R 1250 RT	$37,840	✗
K 1600 GT	$42,820	✗
K 1600 GTL	$44,520	✗
K 1600 B	$42,820	✗
K 1600 Grand America	$44,290	✗
G 310 R	$7990	✓
F 900 R	$15,420	✗
S 1000 R	$22,090	✗
M 1000 R	$32,290	✗
R 1250 R	$26,320	✗
R 18	$23,140	✗
R 18 Classic	$25,840	✗
R 18 B Deluxe	$35,400	✗
R 18 Transcontinental	$37,940	✗
R nineT	$25,490	✗
R nineT Pure	$20,210	✗
R nineT Scrambler	$21,410	✗
R nineT Urban G/S	$21,260	✗
G 310 GS	$8390	✓
F 750 GS	$17,945	✗
F 850 GS	$22,005	✗
F 850 GS Adventure	$23,830	✗
R 1250 GS	$31,320	✗
R 1250 GS Adventure	$33,305	✗
C 400 GT	$11,740	✓
C 400 X	$10,490	✓
CE 04	$21,900	✓

BRP au.brp.com

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Ryker 600	$15,199	✓
Ryker 900	$17,749	✗
Ryker Rally 900	$19,799	✗
Spyder F3 S	$31,149	✗
Spyder F3 LTD	$35,699	✗
Spyder RT LTD	$41,449	✗

CFMOTO cfmoto.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
150NK	$4290	✓
300NK	$5490	✓
300SR	$6290	✓
650MT	$8290	✓
650GT	$8490	✓
650NK	$8290	✓
700CL-X Heritage	$9490	✗
700CL-X Sport	$10,490	✗
800MT Sport	$12,990	✗
800MT Touring	$14,490	✗

DUCATI ducati.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Multistrada V4	$30,800	✗
Multistrada V4 S	$35,000	✗
Multistrada V4 S Sport	$42,900	✗
Multistrada V4 Pikes Peak	$45,000	✗
Multistrada V2	$23,200	✗
Multistrada V2 S	$25,700	✗
DesertX	$24,700	✗
Hypermotard 950	$23,100	✗
Hypermotard 950 RVE	$24,700	✗
Hypermotard 950 SP	$28,900	✗
Streetfighter V2	$23,200	✗
Streetfighter V4	$32,400	✗
Streetfighter V4 S	$37,000	✗
Streetfighter V4 SP	$48,400	✗
Monster	$19,200	✗
Monster+	$19,800	✗
Monster SP	$23,200	✗
Monster 659	$13,500	✓
Supersport	$20,900	✗
Supersport S	$23,200	✗
Scrambler Urban Motard	$18,900	✗
Scrambler Icon	$15,600	✗
Scrambler Icon Dark	$14,900	✗
Scrambler Desert Sled	$20,000	✗
Scrambler Nightshift	$18,300	✗
Scrambler 1100 Dark PRO	$19,100	✗
Scrambler 1100 PRO	$20,390	✗
Scrambler 1100 Tribute Pro	$21,300	✗
Scrambler 1100 Sport PRO	$24,200	✗
Panigale V4	$34,700	✗
Panigale V4 S	$43,900	✗
Panigale V4 SP2	$56,900	✗
Panigale V2	$24,900	✗
Diavel 1260	$32,800	✗
Diavel 1260 S	$38,400	✗
Diavel V4	$41,100	✗
XDiavel Dark	$31,800	✗
XDiavel S	$38,900	✗
XDiavel Nera	$44,900	✗

ENERGICA australianelectricmotorco.com/energica-motorcycles

Plus on-road costs

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Experia	$48,164	✗
Ego	$41,725	✗
Ego+	$52,233	✗
Ego+ RS	$55,329	✗
Ribelle	$50,374	✗
Ribelle RS	$52,470	✗
Esseesse9	$35,478	✗
Esseesse9+	$46,563	✗

GASGAS gasgasaustralia.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
EC250	$15,599	✓
EC250F	$15,599	✓
EC300	$17,069	✓
EC350F	$16,659	✓
SM 700	$19,105	✓
ES 700	$19,105	✓

H-D harley-davidson.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Softail Standard	$22,995	✗
Nightster	$23,995	✗
Street Bob 114	$26,250	✗
Sport Glide	$29,750	✗
Low Rider S	$30,750	✗
Low Rider ST	$35,250	✗
Fat Bob 114	$31,750	✗
Heritage Classic 114	$36,250	✗
Fat Boy 114	$36,250	✗
Breakout 114	$36,250	✗
Road King Special	$39,495	✗
Road Glide Special	$41,995	✗
Road Glide ST	$44,995	✗
Sportster S	$26,495	✗
Street Glide Special	$41,995	✗
Street Glide ST	$44,995	✗
Ultra Limited	$43,995	✗
Freewheeler	$49,250	✗
Tri Glide Ultra	$59,250	✗
CVO Street Glide	$58,250	✗
CVO Road Glide	$58,750	✗
CVO Limited	$61,750	✗
CVO Tri Glide	$76,250	✗
Pan America 1250S	$33,495	✗

HONDA hondamotorcycles.com.au

Plus on-road costs

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
GL1800 Goldwing DCT	$41,999	✗
GL1800 Goldwing Tour Prem DCT	$49,999	✗
NT1100	$21,690	✗
NT1100D DCT	$22,699	✗
CBR1000RR-R SP	$52,999	✗
CBR650R	$12,499	✓
CBR600RR	$27,599	✗

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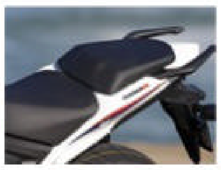
MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
CBR500R	$9999	✓
CB125F	$2999	✓
CB500F	$9499	✓
CB650R	$11,699	✓
CB300R	$7199	✓
CB750F Hornet	$12,099	×
CMX1100 DCT	$19,649	×
CMX1100	$18,549	×
CMX500	$9349	✓
NSS350A Forza	$9749	✓
NSC110 Dio	$3349	✓
MW110 Benly	$3999	✓
CRF1100 Africa Twin	$22,999	×
CRF1100 Africa Twin AS	$26,199	×
CRF1100 Africa Twin AS DCT	$27,499	×
CRF1100 Africa Twin AS DCT ES	$29,899	×
CRF300LRA Rally	$9399	✓
CB500XA	$10,199	✓
CRF300LA	$8199	✓
AG-XR	$5399	✓
HUSQVARNA husqvarnamotorcycles.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
Vitpilen 401	$7975	✓
Svartpilen 401	$7975	✓
FS450	$16,625	✓
701 Supermoto	$19,490	×
701 Enduro	$19,490	×
2022 TE 150i	$14,735	✓
2023 TE 150i	$14,959	✓
2022 TE 250i	$16,520	✓
2023 TE 250i	$16,789	✓
2022 TE 300i	$18,025	✓
2023 TE 300i	$18,379	✓
2022 FE 250	$16,520	✓
2023 FE 250	$16,789	✓
2022 FE 350	$17,610	✓
2023 FE 350	$17,929	✓
2022 FE 450	$18,025	✓
2023 FE 450	$18,269	✓
2022 FE 501	$18,655	✓
2023 FE 501	$18,929	✓
Norden 901	$25,050	×
INDIAN indianmotorcycle.com.au		
All Indian prices are ride away		
Scout Bobber	$23,995	×
Scout Bobber Twenty	$24,495	×
Scout	$24,995	×
Scout Rogue	$25,995	×
Chief Dark Horse	$28,995	×
Chief Bobber Dark Horse	$30,495	×
Sport Chief	$32,995	×
Super Chief Limited	$32,995	×
Springfield Dark Horse	$38,995	×
Springfield	$39,495	×
Chieftain Dark Horse	$42,495	×
Chieftain Limited	$42,995	×
Challenger Dark Horse	$43,495	×
Challenger Limited	$43,995	×
Challenger Elite	$51,995	×
Roadmaster Dark Horse	$45,495	×
Roadmaster Limited	$45,995	×
Roadmaster Classic	$46,995	×
Pursuit Dark Horse	$46,995	×
Pursuit Limited	$47,495	×
FTR	$23,995	×
FTR Sport	$25,995	×
FTR Rally	$25,995	×
FTR R Carbon	$27,995	×
KAWASAKI kawasaki.com.au		
Plus on-road costs		
Versys-X 300 SE	$7578	✓
Ninja 400 SE	$7713	✓
Ninja 400	$7413	✓
Z400	$7263	✓
Ninja 650L	$11,378	✓
Ninja 650	$11,378	×
Versys 650L	$12,178	✓
Z650L	$11,278	✓
Z650RS	$12,078	✓
W800 Cafe	$14,298	×
W800 Street	$13,898	×
Z900 Supernaked	$13,528	×
Z900RS	$16,778	×
Ninja 1000SX	$17,878	×



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CBR500R

ENGINE	471cc parallel-twin
POWER	35kW (48hp)
TORQUE	43Nm
WEIGHT	194kg (kerb)
PRICE	$9999 (ride away)

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BUYER'S GUIDE. A-Z OF NEW BIKE PRICES

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Versys 1000S	$20,978	×
Z1000	$16,978	×
Ninja ZX-6R (636) KRT	$16,178	×
Ninja H2	$38,379	×
Ninja H2R	$67,299	×
Ninja H2 SX	$32,379	×
Ninja ZX-10R	$26,879	×
Ninja ZX-10RR	$42,379	×
Z H2	$24,279	×
Ninja ZX-14R SE	$23,378	×
Vulcan S	$10,578	×
Vulcan S LAMS	$10,678	✓
Kawasaki KLX150BF SE	$4763	✓
Kawasaki KLX230	$6463	✓
KLX230SM	$7563	✓
KLX250	$7363	✓
KLX450R	$12,063	✓
KLR650 ABS	$9463	✓
KLR650 ABS Adventure	$10,3463	✓

KTM

ktm.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
200 Duke ABS	$5470	✓
390 Duke	$7885	✓
890 Duke	$16,850	×
890 DukeGP	$17,120	×
890 Duke R	$19,840	×
690 SMC R	$19,295	×
RC 390	$8399	✓
1290 Super Duke R	$29,420	×
1290 Super Duke R EVO	$32,115	×
1290 Super Duke GT	$33,165	×
690 Enduro R	$19,295	×
390 Adventure	$9970	✓
890 Adventure	$23,400	×
890 Adventure R	$25,380	×
1290 Super Adventure S	$31,710	×
1290 Super Adventure R	$33,265	
2022 150 EXC	$14,175	✓
2023 150 EXC	$14,599	✓
2022 250 EXC	$15,900	✓
2023 250 EXC	$16,399	✓
2022 250 EXC-F	$15,900	✓
2023 250 EXC-F	$16,399	✓
2022 300 EXC TPI	$17,400	✓
2023 300 EXC TPI	$17,879	✓
2022 350 EXC-F	$16,985	✓
2023 350 EXC-F	$17,449	✓
2022 450 EXC-F	$17,300	✓
2023 450 EXC-F	$17,799	✓
2022 500 EXC-F	$17,925	✓
2023 500 EXC-F	$18,419	✓

KYMCO

kymco.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Agility 50	$2490	✓
Like 50 4T	$2890	✓
Agility RS 125 CBS	$2990	✓
Agility 16+ 125 (w/ top box)	$3490	✓
Agility 16+ 200i (w/ top box)	$4190	✓
People S 150 (w/ top box)	$5190	✓
Super 8 50 2T	$2790	✓
Like 125 CBS (w/ top box)	$3990	✓
Like 200i (w/ top box)	$3990	✓
Like 150R ABS (w/ top box)	$5290	✓
Like 150S	$4790	✓
Agility 16+ 300	$6990	✓
Downtown 350i ABS	$8290	✓
DTX360	$8790	✓
Xciting S 400i ABS	$9990	✓
AK550 ABS	$13,490	✓

LAMBRETTA

lambrettaaustralia.com.au

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
V50 Special Flex	$3590	✓
V200 Special Flex	$4990	✓

MOTO GUZZI

motoguzzi.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
V7 Stone	$18,030	×
V7 Stone Centenario	$19,030	×
V7 Special	$18,930	×
V9 Bobber Centenario	$19,330	×
V85 TT	$22,230	×
V85 TT Evocative	$22,830	×
V85 TT Travel	$24,330	×
V85 TT Centenario	$22,830	×

MV AGUSTA

mvagusta.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
F3 800 Rosso	$36,990	×
F3 800 RR	$41,990	×
Brutale 800 Rosso	$29,990	×
Brutale 800 RR	$34,990	×
Brutale 1000 RS	$51,990	×
Brutale 1000 RR	$63,990	×
Rush 1000 (+race kit)	$76,880	×
Dragster 800 Rosso	$32,990	×
Dragster 800 RR SCS	$37,990	×
Dragster 800 RC SCS	$41,990	×
Superveloce 800	$42,990	×
Superveloce 800S	$48,990	×
Superveloce 800S (+race kit)	$51,590	×
Turismo Veloce Rosso	$33,990	×
Turismo Veloce Lusso SCS	$43,990	×

PEUGEOT

peugeotmotorcycles.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Kisbee 50 2T	$2990	✓
Tweet 200	$5790	✓
Tweet 200 GT	$5990	✓
Django 50	$4190	✓
Django 150	$5490	✓
Belville 200 RS	$5990	✓
Metropolis 400	$14,790	✓

PIAGGIO

piaggio.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Typhoon 50	$4140	✓
Medley	$6540	✓
Medley S	$6640	✓
Beverly 400 S	$12,440	✓

RIEJU

rieju.com.au

Plus on-road costs

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
MR Ranger 200	$12,790	✓
MR Ranger 300	$12,990	✓
MR Racing 250	$13,990	✓
MR Racing 300	$14,290	✓
MR Pro 250	$15,690	✓
MR Pro 300	$15,990	✓

ROYAL ENFIELD

royalenfield.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Meteor 350 Fireball	$7890	✓
Meteor 350 Stellar	$8290	✓
Meteor 350 Supernova	$8690	✓
Hunter 350 Dapper	$7590	✓
Hunter 350 Rebel	$7690	✓
Classic 350 Halcyon	$7990	✓
Classic 350 Signals	$8290	✓
Classic 350 Dark	$8690	✓
Classic 350 Chrome	$8790	✓
Scram 411 Base	$8240	✓
Scram 411 Mid	$8340	✓
Scram 411 Premium	$8440	✓
Interceptor 650 Classic	$10,990	✓
Interceptor 650 Custom	$11,290	✓
Interceptor 650 Chrome	$11,590	✓
Continental GT 650 Classic	$10,990	✓
Continental GT 650 Custom	$11,290	✓
Continental GT 650 Chrome	$11,590	✓
Himalayan 410	$8390	✓
Super Meteor 650 Astra Black-Blue	$11,990	✓
Super Meteor 650 Interstellar Green	$12,190	✓
Super Meteor 650 Celestial Blue-Red	$11,290	✓

SHERCO

Sherco.com

Plus on-road costs

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
125 SE Factory	$13,499	✓
250 SE Factory	$14,999	✓
300 SE Factory	$15,499	✓
250 SEF Factory	$15,499	✓
300 SEF Factory	$15,999	✓
450 SEF Factory	$16,799	✓
500 SEF Factory	$16,999	✓

SUZUKI

suzukimotorcycles.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
Address 110	$3890	✓
Avenis 125	$4890	✓
GSX-S125A	$5440	✓
V-Strom 250SX	$6480	✓
V-Strom 650XT	$14,990	×
V-Strom 650XT LAMS	$14,990	✓
SV650	$11,490	×
SV650 LAMS	$11,490	✓
GSX-S750	$14,390	×
2023 GSX-R1000	$24,990	×
2023 GSX-R1000R	$27,990	×
GSX-S1000	$17,990	×
GSX-S1000GT	$19,990	×
Katana	$21,990	×
V-Strom 1050DE	$24,690	×
Hayabusa	$27,790	×
Boulevard M109R	$21,990	×
Trojan	$5990	✓
DR-Z400E	$11,390	✓
DR650SE	$10,390	✓

SUPER SOCO

supersoco.com.au

All prices are ride away

MODEL	PRICE $AUD	LAMS
TC - Cafe	$5490	✓
TC Max (alloy wheels)	$7990	✓
TC Max (wire-spoke wheels)	$8290	✓
CUX Scooter	$4990	✓
CUX Scooter - Ducati	$5490	✓
CPx Scooter	$7690	✓
CPx Scooter Dual Battery	$9990	✓

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SWM swmmotorcycles.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
RS300R	$8590	✓
RS500R	$9290	✓
SYM SCOOTA symscooters.com.au		
Crox 50	$2490	✓
Mio 50i	$2890	✓
Classic 125	$2790	✓
Orbit 125	$2790	✓
Orbit II 125i	$3190	✓
Symphony ST 200i	$3990	✓
Classic 200i	$4090	✓
HD300i	$6690	✓
GTS300i Sport	$7690	✓
TRIUMPH triumphmotorcycles.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
Speed Twin 900	$16,190	×
Bonneville T100	$18,290	×
Scrambler 900	$18,590	×
Bonneville T120	$20,890	×
Speed Twin 1200	$21,090	×
Thruxton RS	$25,990	×
Bonneville Speedmaster	$22,490	×
Bonneville Bobber	$22,490	×
Scrambler 1200 XC	$23,450	×
Scrambler 1200 XE	$24,890	×
Rocket 3 R	$34,450	×
Rocket 3 GT	$35,850	×
Trident 660 LAMS	$13,150	✓
Street Triple S 660	$14,990	✓
Speed Triple 765 R	$18,140	×
Street Triple 765 RS	$20,590	×
Street Triple 765 Moto2 Edition	$25,290	×
Speed Triple 1200 RS	$28,490	×
Tiger 850 Sport	$18,250	×
Tiger 900 GT (and Low)	$21,250	×
Tiger 900 GT Pro	$24,250	×
Tiger 900 Rally	$22,390	×
Tiger 900 Rally Pro	$24,890	×
Tiger 1200 GT Pro	$29,990	×
Tiger 1200 Rally Pro	$31,800	×
Tiger 1200 GT Explorer	$32,600	×
Tiger 1200 Rally Explorer	$33,950	×
URAL ural.com		
CT	$25,299	×
Gear Up	$28,599	×
Sportsman SE	$30,599	×
Sahara SE	$30,599	×
VESPA vespa.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
Primavera 50	$6490	✓
Primavera 125 i-Get	$7690	✓
Primavera 150 i-Get	$8490	✓
Primavera 150 S	$8590	✓
Primavera 150 Red	$8990	✓
Primavera 150 SE Picnic	$9040	✓
Primavera 150 75 Anno	$9890	✓
Sprint i-Get	$8590	✓
GTS 150 i-Get	$9590	✓
GTS 300 Super Sport	$12,290	✓
GTS 300 Super Tech	$12,890	✓
GTV 300 'Sei Giorni'	$12,590	✓
GTS 300 75 Anno	$13,590	✓
YAMAHA yamaha-motor.com.au		
All prices are ride away		
D'elight 125 White	$3949	✓
NMAX 155	$6149	✓
Tricity 155	$7699	✓
XMAX 300	$10,049	✓
Tricity 300	$13,099	✓
TMAX 560	$20,649	✓
XV250 Virago	$8849	✓
YZF-R15	$6299	✓
MT-03	$8199	✓
YZF-R3	$8549	✓
MT-07 LAMS	$13,549	✓
MT-07 HO	$14,449	×
XSR700	$14,299	✓
MT-09	$16,399	×
MT-09 SP	$18,899	×
XSR900	$18,049	×
Tracer 9 GT	$24,999	×
Niken GT	$29,349	×
MT-10	$24,649	×
MT-10 SP	$28,499	×
FJR1300	$33,999	×
YZF-R6 (Race only)	$19,849	×
YZF-R7 LAMS	$14,599	✓
YZF-R7 HO	$15,649	×
YZF-R1	$29,349	×
YZF-R1M	$38,599	×
WR250F	$15,999	✓
WR450F	$17,349	✓
Tenere 700	$19,999	×
Tenere 700 World Raid	$25,499	×
Super Tenere	$26,999	×

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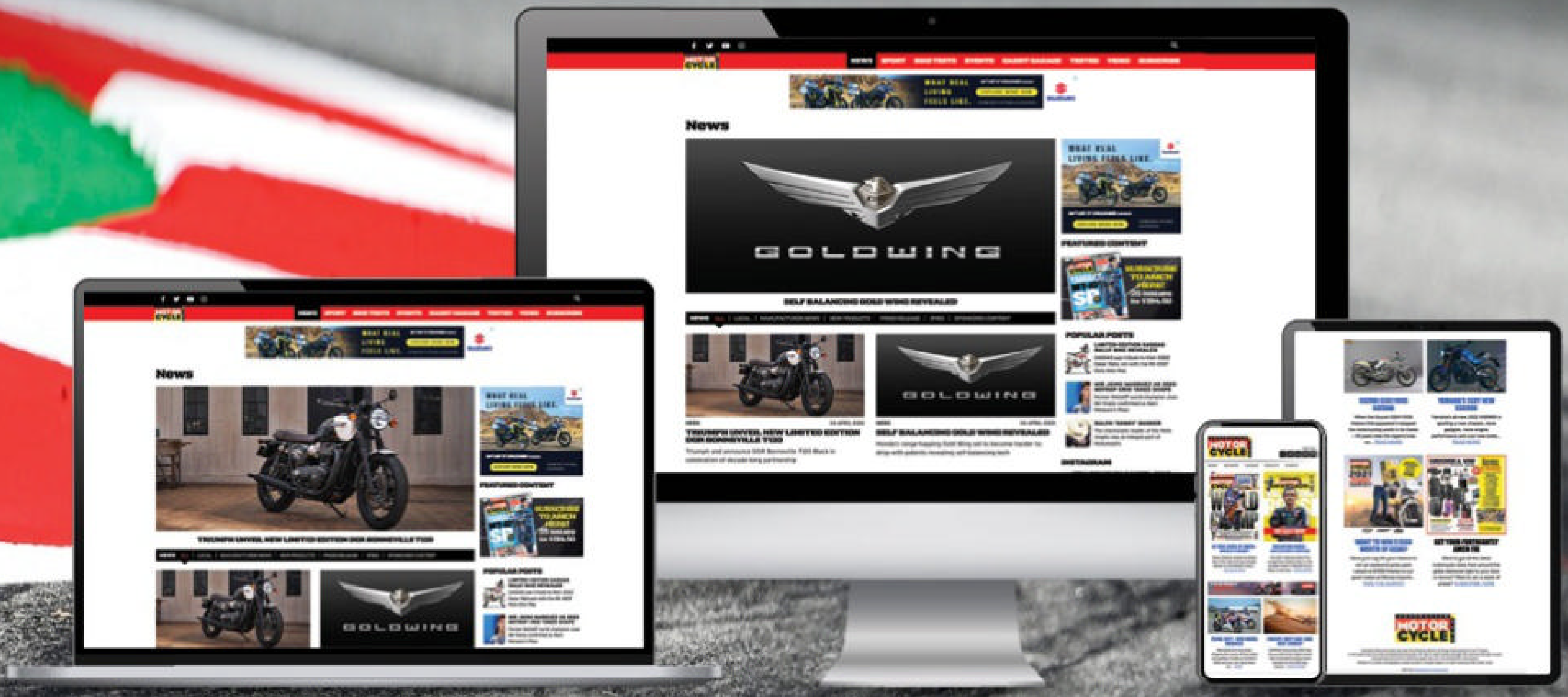

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“BARRY SHEENE HERE, I’M A PHONE MAN, NOT A FAX MAN; THAT’S WHY I’M CALLING”

THE BEDSIDE phone rang at 6.30am. I sleepily picked it up and the voice on the other end of the blower said: “Barry Sheene here, I’m a phone man, not a fax man; that’s why I’m calling.”

A few days earlier I’d faxed Barry Sheene MBE, two-time world 500cc grand prix champion, after *Classic Racer* magazine had commissioned me to interview him about his new retirement life Down Under.

“So, Bob Berry’s put you in touch with me?” he asked. Berry was a former sports editor for the UK’s *Motor Cycle News* and now editor of *Classic Racer*.

“Well, does he know that the last interview I did was with *Hello* magazine and they paid me quite well? Hope he’s got some sort of budget for this.”

Shaking away the early morning fog in my head, I gathered all the skills honed working in the cut-throat world of 1980s Sydney tabloid newspapers and played the only card in my pack: the Joker.

I replied that he was already rich but I might get famous by interviewing him. The only money that would change hands was the *Classic Bike* airfare and motel reimbursement.

“Okay. Don’t worry about all that,” he barked. “When do you want to come up here? And don’t bother about a hire car, just get a taxi to our place, there are motels nearby.”

Photographer Andre Kamer and I arrived at the neo-Spanish Sheene residence just after 10am the following Saturday. He came out to meet us, looking fit, tanned and wearing battered boardshorts with a perfectly white Cagiva-Ducati singlet tucked in (as you did in those days). His semi-mullet hair looked impossibly black, considering the life-changing traumas he’d been through.

As well as the huge injuries sustained during his career, he’d also recently been battling a type of chronic fatigue.

Bazza looked us up and down and we must have passed the test because he invited us in. Soon we were in his study and he was happily posing for portrait photos. Then he walked us around his collection of GP bikes as Kamer kept the camera snapping.

He stopped in front of one of his semi-factory Yamahas and pointed to a large photograph of him racing it that was mounted high up on the wall.

“See that? It couldn’t pull the cock off a chocolate frog,” he said. (I still have that photo up on my workshop/study wall as a moment of conversation caught perfectly by an old-school photographer in a single shot because Velvia 50 film was so expensive.) Sheene then took us to his workshop where he was putting a 750cc ‘water-bottle’ Suzuki triple engine back into its Seeley frame as part of the restoration of the bikes he’d raced early in his career.

He soon got us involved with some menial workshop tasks then suddenly stopped and said: “It’s nearly lunchtime. Grab the Monster, get some more of these metric nuts, sort out a motel and buy some lunch at the servo up the road. Just put it on my tab.”

I must have looked at him with disbelief because he said: “No. I’m not stupid enough to own the petrol station; I own the land it stands on but they know me there. Also don’t forget that the Monster has a reversed race-shift on it.”

So, there I was bungling around Nerang running Bazza’s errands on a tricked-out 900cc Ducati Monster.

It’s hard to believe it’s 20 years since Barry left us. In retirement from GP racing, he quickly found a new life Down Under, both as a GP commentator on television and a talent scout who helped youngsters like Troy Corser and Chris Vermeulen get into international competition.

Bazza never wasted a minute. Including the uncomfortable early-morning phone call Bob Berry received a few months later. He had dragged an old racing photo out of the files to accompany our feature and used the original caption.

“You got it wrong 10 years ago and you’ve got it wrong again!” Sheene screeched. Godspeed Bazza, a phone man, not a fax man.

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1. Hard at it during the preseason test at Sydney Motorsport Park

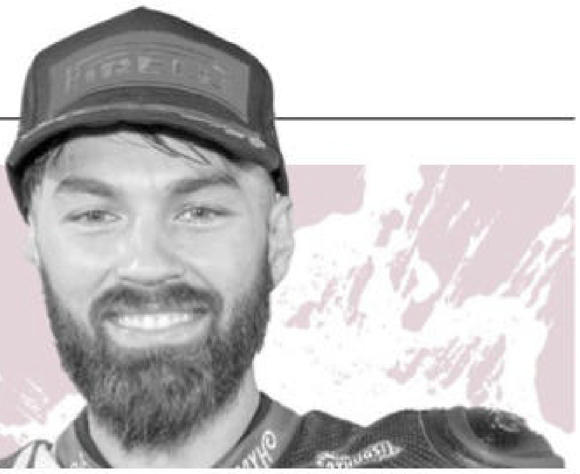
2. The top three 300 Supersport riders at round two of the ASBK title: (L to R) Swain, Demmery and Gawith

3. Seems like a lifetime ago… 300 Production success in 2016

4. Demmery under lights at the SMSP ASBK round, where he won two of the three races

5. Turn 4 action at the Phillip Island ASBK opener

REVOLVING RACER. WITH BRANDON DEMMERY



“RIDERS WHO RELIED ON THEIR WEIGHT TO GAIN A SLIPSTREAMING ADVANTAGE NOW HAVE TO ACTUALLY PUT A DECENT LAP TOGETHER”

THE REASON why we’re riding 300s is all about budget. I’d love to race a 600, I really would, but we don’t have the budget to do that. It is good fun though. This year, a lot of the more experienced riders have stepped up to Supersport, so the group at the moment is a little bit less experienced as a collective than they have been in the last couple of years.

Cam, Brodie Gawith, Henry Snell, Jai Russo – they have all been around for a few years now and are very good racers, but they are the older heads of the class other than me. It is good that everyone is progressing up; that’s the whole idea of the class. It is good to be there and have a bit of experience and show the younger guys how to race.

Racing at any level is expensive – we’re all going to work every day – with mums and dads going to work every day to pay for this level of racing; it’s just the way it is in Australia at the moment. When guys like Cameron Dunker can step up and show some speed on a 600, it shows that the 300 class really works as a racing platform.

Our plan is to turn up to win – no one shows up at a racetrack to come second. We want to put on a good show, have some success and attract extra backing so I can step up to the supersport class.

Next year would be good, but it isn’t guaranteed. I’ve got a good operation behind me this year, and we have some good sponsors helping out. Steve Johnston and Nigel Taylor are on the tools at the track and Troy (Corser) is helping out with rider training. It means I can just concentrate on riding, which is a big thing. Previously, every aspect had been down to me and it meant I didn’t get any time to rest between a race. I was changing tyres on bikes, getting food together – all those little things that take up your time besides riding.

I took 12 months off last year and didn’t race, which I think was good for me mentally and physically. I’ve had my share of injuries to recover from, the worst being a startline crash at Phillip Island where I had a compound fracture of my right tibia, fibula and femur and also broke my pelvis and right wrist! At the end of 2020 I had a really unlucky crash when an advertising sign was blown into me and broke my right collarbone. Both of these have given me a fair bit of trouble over the last few years and I am still trying to get full strength back in my right leg.

This year with the new regulations in 300s there is a minimum rider and bike combined weight, and it makes a massive difference. A few years ago I was giving away 20 or 30kg to some of the riders; now I’m only giving away 10. Ten kilograms doesn’t sound like much but it makes it so much easier for me as a rider. There were some riders that I would have had absolutely no chance of slipstreaming last year that I can now pass. It definitely brings a bit of parity to the class.

Previously, some riders who might be two or three seconds a lap slower than someone else – on a big track like Phillip Island or Sydney Motorsport Park, all they would have to do is get a decent start and then latch on.

So the minimum weight also helps with promoting ability because riders that could have previously relied on their light weight to gain a slipstreaming advantage now have to actually be able to put a decent lap together.

I still believe the 300 platform is the best start to a career – there aren’t any GP bikes available in Australia and, if you want to go down the GP path, it means sending your child to Europe and taking out a massive mortgage just for one season of racing.

I definitely want to continue riding for the immediate future, but I want to be involved in the sport after I finish riding so I’ve been trying to get things put into place for that.

I would still like to race overseas at some point, but we’ll just see what happens. Right now, I’m taking it one race at a time to try and put together a decent season and hopefully that can open some doors for next year.

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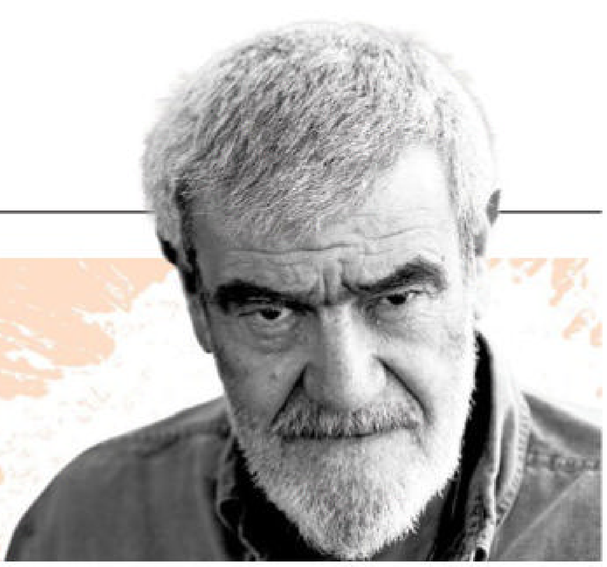
IN PIT LANE. WITH MICHAEL SCOTT



“WHEN THE STEWARDS SCORED AN OWN GOAL WITH THEIR PENALTY AGAINST MARQUEZ, THE CRITICS RUBBED THEIR HANDS IN GLEE”

FREDDIE SPENCER’S stewards panel has been especially busy this season, flinging out sanctions like a sinking ship’s captain jettisoning unpopular passengers. It’s hard not to imagine them feeling proud when, two races in, they’ve found reason to apply no less than 15 penalties, including one (for Moto2’s Vietti) carried over from 2022.

All in the name of improving safety, for sundry offences, including being “overly ambitious” (which some might consider part of the job description for a world championship wannabe).

Improving safety is of course a noble aim. Particularly in the thrillingly lunatic new sprint races, where riders throw caution to the winds in an intensely concentrated gallop which (to anyone who has ever been club racing, or indeed enjoyed watching all-action speedway) is the very essence of real uncluttered motorcycle racing.

Given the slew of injuries in the premier class alone so far (Enea Bastianini, Pol Espargaro, Marc Marquez, Miguel Oliveira out after one race, now also Joan Mir after the second) it is chilling to think how much worse it might have been without the stewards’ calming influence.

But they are not making any friends.

It’s less the penalties and more the inconsistencies that upset teams and riders. For starters, the cost of a long-lap penalty varies massively from one circuit to another. And the imposition of time penalties or the dreaded “lose one position” for straying over the paint in an ill-judged last-lap battle messes not only with the finishing order, but also rider tactics.

Then there is the arbitrary nature of decisions (stewards are not obliged to explain their reasoning). In Portugal, Luca Marini knocked Bastianini down and broke his shoulder. In Argentina, Maverick Vinales knocked Brad Binder off and Takaaki Nakagami pushed Fabio Quartararo into the dirt, dropping him to last. No penalties.

But in Portugal when Marquez slipped up and clobbered Oliveira, he was penalised (“overly aggressive”). In Argentina, Moto2’s Sergio Garcia suffered likewise, and Scott Ogden also after his last-lap braking fumble knocked early front-runner David Alamansa off.

All were without doubt “overly ambitious”. But what was the difference between these mistakes and those that went unpunished? And on the other hand, are the punishments sufficient? After Marquez’s unfortunate close encounter with Oliveira, the frequently outspoken fellow Aprilia rider Aleix Espargaro was loudly calling for a one-race ban; while the Portuguese rider’s team owner Razlan Razali was demanding a high-level conference on the whole matter.

Like I said – not too many friends. Consequently, when the stewards scored an own goal with their penalty against Marquez, the critics rubbed their hands in glee. They’d set him a double long-lap penalty, to be served in the “Argentina MotoGP race”. Marc acknowledged his error and accepted the punishment. Next day, back home, doctors discovered a fracture in his right thumb. It was fixable, but Marc withdrew from the coming weekend’s Argentine race. Thus he was unable to serve the penalty as specified.

The stewards hastily “clarified” their decision. The penalty would now be served at his next race, wherever it might be. Justice would be served, at their convenience. Or would it?

“Foul”, cried Repsol Honda. Against the rules! Too late to change the specified punishment. Especially since it would penalise Marc at CotA, a circuit where he reigns supreme. The FIM appeal stewards considered their appeal, saw the team’s point… and passed the buck to the MotoGP Court of Appeal.

We await their lordships’ decision. And enjoy the discomfort of the all-powerful but perhaps on this occasion overly ambitious stewards, who must follow the rules as much as the riders. After all, as those with long memories are happy to keep reminding us that had there been stewards and sanctions in Sweden back in 1983, Freddie Spencer’s “overly aggressive” last-lap attack, pushing Kenny Roberts into the dirt while himself running wide and “exceeding track limits”, he would not have won the championship.

ROUND 02 TERMAS DE RIO HONDO CIRCUIT, ARGENTINA 31 MARCH - 2 APRIL // 2023 MOTOGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MOTOGP

MARCO SOLO

In a league of his own, Bezzechi leaves Argentina in front!

REPORT **NEIL MORRISON** + PHOTOGRAPHY **GOLD&GOOSE**

PREDICTABLE? MAYBE. Ominous? Certainly. It may have been the Argentinean low hanging cloud, but from a distance it was hard to decipher the apprentice from the master. Marco Bezzecchi (Mooney VR46 Ducati) posted a dominant performance idol and boss Valentino Rossi would have been proud, as the Italian led every lap of a wet Argentine GP, winning by 4sec to claim a debut MotoGP victory for both himself and his team.

It was fair to say this was coming. Bezzecchi had threatened to challenge MotoGP's leading men in the autumn of last year, the close of his rookie season. And a weekend on from a sterling third place in Portugal, he looked the pick of the field in both dry and wet conditions around the 4.8km Termas de Rio Hondo Circuit. Only Brad Binder's (Red Bull KTM) sensational charge through the pack in Saturday's Sprint kept him from scoring maximum points.

Yes, the low-grip surroundings of the seldom used Argentine venue – last frequented in July, 2022 – helped his cause. But such was the assuredness of his industrious Sunday display, one was left to wonder just how far he can go this year.

"It's like a dream for me," said a tearful Uccio Salucci, Rossi's right-hand man and the team's Sporting Director, after. "Bezz is a dark horse!" On this evidence, the 24-year-old is this season's candidate to replicate Enea Bastianini's satellite Ducati feats from one year ago.

In line with the opening round, Ducati was once again the dominating force. With Johann Zarco (Pramac Ducati) stealing second late on from Alex Marquez (Gresini Ducati), three of its machines from separate satellite teams occupied the podium places – a first for a premier-class manufacturer since 1996, when a trio of independent Honda NSR500s locked out the first podium of that year.

But in a divergence from the previous week's scraps, Bologna's leader in chief was found wanting as Francesco Bagnaia (Lenovo Ducati) threw away a safe second place with a careless crash. The Italian had ticked off the weekend's

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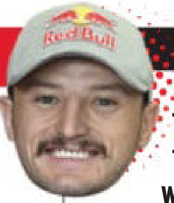
Cracker Jack



MotoGP 10th/6th

MILLER SAID HE COULDN'T be happy with sixth. But it was another solid weekend in his start to life at KTM. Qualifying 16th, he was far off in wet conditions on Saturday. He took 10th in the Sprint, before he charged through to sixth on Sunday. "It was a weekend of learning," he said. "With the first rollout here in the wet, we were really far away. But we made a big step this morning. Starting from 16th wasn't the easiest thing in the world, but we worked our way through. Got about three laps into it and just hit a wall. I don't know if I cooked the rear tyre a little bit, but started having moment after moment. The pace was really good in the Sprint race. I was kind of hoping for a dry one today, as we've got a decent base setting."

1. Bezzecchi's now joined the illustrious list of MotoGP winners **2.** Marquez and Morbidelli pushing through the big slosh **3.** A 4-4 scorecard was a huge boost for the embattled Morbidelli **4.** Bagnaia crashed out of a secure second position in the main race **5.** Bezzecchi wore the Argentine soccer jersey on the podium - just like his mentor Valentino Rossi did in 2015 **6.** Miller congratulates Binder after his stirring victory in the Sprint race

challenges – qualifying third thanks to an inspired switch to slicks on damp track, sixth in the Sprint, and building into this contest – with the effortlessness of a champion. Yet that assurance deserted him on lap 17 when he tucked the front at Turn 13.

"This year I was a better more precise rider," he shrugged. "But in the second race of the year and I already crashed." Little wonder he was "very angry." This was reminiscent of his all-too-regular blunders from the first half of 2022.

Sunday's rather processional race was a stark contrast to the previous day's 12-lap shootout. An already beleaguered field of just 17 riders started on Sunday – the lowest number since 2011 – as Joan Mir's (Repsol Honda) violent Sprint highside forced him onto the growing casualty list.

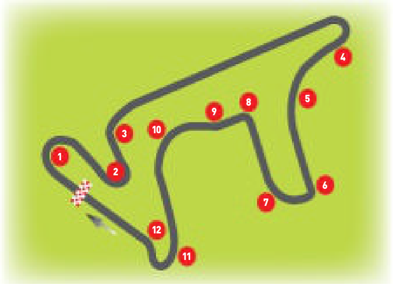
A switch to slicks in Q2 earned Bezzecchi a spot in the middle of the front row, sandwiched between debut polesitter Marquez and the reigning champion. That trio led out of Turn 1 after Franco Morbidelli's lunge on the Monster Energy Yamaha briefly claimed the lead, only to run wide, dropping him to fourth, ahead of Zarco, Aleix Espargaro (Aprilia Racing), Alex Rins (LCR Honda) and Italian Fabio Di Giannantonio (Gresini Ducati).

Two heavy-hitters fell by the wayside early on, as Maverick Viñales (Aprilia Racing) tagged Binder at Turn 5, causing the South African to crash. Fabio Quartararo (Monster Energy Yamaha) was then left incensed as Takaaki Nakagami (LCR Honda) pushed him off track at Turn 7, before he rejoined in last place. "There's always someone that breaks your balls in the first lap for nothing," he later fumed.

There was no such drama up front, as Bezzecchi worked on building a comfortable advantage. He was a full 0.7sec faster than the rest on lap one. Marquez, Bagnaia and Morbidelli then fell into line, attempting to replicate the leader's pace, which was pulling them clear of the pack. It was a good job, too, as Di Giannantonio and Rins' lap-five moves on Zarco were full-blooded affairs, before Jack Miller (Red Bull KTM) also got in on the act on the

QUARTARARO: "THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEONE THAT BREAKS YOUR BALLS IN THE FIRST LAP FOR NOTHING"

MotoGP: Round 2 results and standings



Termas de Rio, Hondo, Argentina
4.81km

2022 Winners
MotoGP **A Espargaro**
Moto2 **C Vietti**
Moto3 **S Garcia**

MotoGP Round 2 Sprint 12 Laps

POS	RIDER	NAT	BIKE	TIME
1	B BINDER	RSA	KTM	19m56.873s
2	M BEZZECCHI	ITA	DUC	+0.072s
3	L MARINI	ITA	DUC	+0.877s
4	F MORBIDELLI	ITA	YAM	+2.354s
5	A MARQUEZ	SPA	DUC	+2.462s
6	F BAGNAIA	ITA	DUC	+2.537s
7	M VIÑALES	SPA	APR	+2.643s
8	J MARTIN	SPA	DUC	+3.754s
9	F QUARTARARO	FRA	YAM	+4.856s
10	J MILLER	AUS	KTM	+5.143s
11	T NAKAGAMI	JPN	HON	+5.574s
12	F DI GIANNANTONIO	ITA	DUC	+6.965s
13	J ZARCO	FRA	DUC	+7.568s
14	R FERNANDEZ	SPA	APR	+7.725s
15	A RINS	SPA	HON	+8.687s
16	A FERNANDEZ	SPA	GAS	+9.040s

DNF: A ESPARGARO (SPA, APR), J MIR (SPA, HON)

POLE POSITION
A MARQUEZ 1m43.881s

FASTEST LAP
NOT GIVEN

MotoGP Round 2 25 Laps

POS	RIDER	NAT	BIKE	TIME
1	M BEZZECCHI	ITA	DUC	44m28.518s
2	J ZARCO	FRA	DUC	+4.085s
3	A MARQUEZ	SPA	DUC	+4.681s
4	F MORBIDELLI	ITA	YAM	+7.581s
5	J MARTIN	SPA	DUC)	+9.746s
6	J MILLER	AUS	KTM	+10.562s
7	F QUARTARARO	FRA	YAM	+11.095s
8	L MARINI	ITA	DUC	+13.694s
9	A RINS	SPA	HON	+14.327s
10	F DI GIANNANTONIO	ITA	DUC	+18.51Ss
11	A FERNANDEZ	SPA	GAS	+19.380s
12	M VIÑALES	SPA	APR	+26.091s
13	T NAKAGAMI	JPN	HON	+28.394s
14	R FERNANDEZ	SPA	APR)	+29.894s
15	A ESPARGARO	SPA	APR	+36.183s
16	F BAGNAIA	ITA	DUC	+47.753s

DNS: J MIR (SPA, HON)

FASTEST LAP
BEZZECCHI1m45.510s

STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 21 ROUNDS
1 BEZZECCHI 50, 2 BAGNAIA 41, 3 ZARCO 35, 4 A MARQUEZ 33, 5 VINALES 32, 6 MILLER 25, 7 MARTIN 22, 8 BINDER 22, 9 MORBIDELLI 21, 10 QUARTARARO 18, 11 MARINI 15, 12 RINS 13, 13 A ESPARGARO 12, 14 FERNANDEZ 8, 15 NAKAGAMI 7.

moto2 Round 2 14 Laps

POS	RIDER	NAT	BIKE	TIME
1	T ARBOLINO	ITA	KAL	26M26.606s
2	A LOPEZ	SPA	BOS)	+0.663s
3	J DIXON	GBR	KAL	+1.961s
4	A CANET	SPA	KAL	+7.769s
5	S GARCIA	SPA	KAL	+11.954s
6	D BINDER	RSA	KAL	+12.274s
7	F SALAC	CZE	KAL	+13.100s
8	S CHANTRA	THA	KAL	+12.758s
9	A ARENAS	SPA	KAL	+13.649s
10	S LOWES	GBR	KAL	+14.107s
11	M GONZALEZ	SPA	KAL	+15.581s
12	P ACOSTA	SPA	KAL	+16.913s
13	C VIETTI	ITA	KAL	+17.135s
14	J ROBERTS	USA	KAL	+25.871s
15	F ALDEGUER	SPA	BOS	+27.388s
16	J TORRES	SPA	KAL	+31.901s
17	J ALCOBA	SPA	KAL	+32.583s
18	Z GOORBERGH	NED	KAL)	+33.523s
19	B BALTUS	BEL	KAL	+33.755s
20	S MINAMIMOTO	JPN	YAM	+33.918s
21	B GOMEZ	SPA	KAL	+48.220s
22	B BENDSNEYDER	NED	KAL	+49.932s
23	DALLA PORTA	ITA	KAL	+55.187s
24	M RAMIREZ	SPA	FOR	+55.414s
25	D FOGGIA	ITA	KAL	+55.564s

DNF: R SKINNER (GBR, KAL), D SANCHIS (SPA, FOR), SD KELLY (USA, KAL)

POLE POSITION (AND NEW BEST LAP)
LOPEZ 1m42.472s

FASTEST LAP
LOPEZ 1m51.191s

STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 21 ROUNDS
1 ARBOLINO 41, 2 CANET 33, 3 ACOSTA 29, 4 DIXON 26, 5 SALAC 22, 6 LOPEZ 20, 7 GONZALES 16, 8 LOWES 15, 9 CHANTRA 15, 10 ARENAS 15, 11 GARCIA 12, 12 BINDER 10, 13 VIETTI 8, 14 ALCOBA 6, 15 BALTUS 4.

moto3 Round 2 18 Laps

POS	RIDER	NAT	BIKE	TIME
1	T SUZUKI	JPN	HON	+35m18.099s
2	D MOREIRA	BRA	KTM	+4.571s
3	A MIGNO	ITA	KTM	+4.699s
4	D HOLGADO	SPA	KTM	+8.814s
5	S OGDEN	GBR	HON	+11.512s
6	S NEPA	ITA	KTM	+11.865s
7	K TOBA	JPN	HON	+12.159s
8	X ARTIGAS	SPA	CFM	+12.467s
9	R YAMANAKA	JPN	GAS	+12.844s
10	D SALVADOR	SPA	KTM	+12.884s
11	S AZMAN	MAL	KTM	+14.033s
12	M BERTELLE	ITA	HON	+20.736s
13	R FENATI	ITA	HON	+26.304s
14	D ALONSO	COL	GAS)	+27.524s
15	J WHATLEY	GBR	HON	+37.725S
16	D MUÑOZ	SPA	KTM	+36.902s
17	D ALMANSA	SPA	CFM	+41.959s
18	T FURUSATO	JPN	HON	+45.783s
19	I ORTOLÁ	SPA	KTM	+47.086s
20	F FARIOLI	ITA	KTM	+47.380
21	A CARRASCO	SPA	KTM	+53.918s
22	C VEIJER	NED	HUS	+55.636s
23	J RUEDA	SPA	KTM	+56.852s
24	D ÖNCÜ	TUR	KTM	+1m.23.159s

DNF: R ROSSI (ITA, HON), J MASIA (SPA, HON), A SASAKI (JPN, HUS), M AJI (INA, HON)

POLE POSITION
SASAKI 1m48.539s

FASTEST LAP
MASIA 1m55.936s

STANDINGS AFTER 2 OF 21 ROUNDS
1 HOLGADO 38, 2 MOREIRA 36, 3 SUZUKI 27, 4 MUNOZ 20, 5 NEPA 19, 6 MIGNO 16, 7 ARTIGAS 16, 8 TOBA 14, 9 RUEDA 13, 10 MASIA 11, 11 OGDEN 11, 12 SASAKI 10, 13 SALVADOR 9, 14 YAMANAKA 7, 15 KELSO 7.

RACE REPORT. YOUR FORTNIGHTLY FIX

1. Binder, Bezzecchi and Marini in close formation **2.** Zarco's late pass on Marquez brought up yet another MotoGP runner-up finish **3.** Delight in the Mooney VR46 team **4.** Miller did say it was hard to see anything... **5.** Binder leads Morbidelli and Marini **6.** The Sprint podium: (L to R) Bezzecchi, Binder and Marini

ROUND 02 TERMAS DE RIO HONDO CIRCUIT, ARGENTINA 31 MARCH - 2 APRIL // 2023 MOTOGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MOTOGP

same circuit, demoting the Frenchman to eighth.

And it didn't sound like much fun in the pack, with the wet dirt on the track surface lodging itself on windscreens and visors.

"The visibility was shocking the first couple of laps, honestly," said Miller. "The windscreen was filthy, you couldn't see a damn thing out of that, so you were sticking your head up down the straight trying to see."

With Ducati in control up front, Aprilia was notable by its absence in the lead fight. Factory man Espargaro looked capable of replicating his 2022 feats, when the factory claimed its sole premier-class victory at this venue, on Friday, as did Viñales. But the RS-GPs' wet settings were a mess, with both men suffering a chronic lack of rear grip.

"I thought I had a flat tyre," Espargaro bemoaned. It wasn't long before he started falling down the pack and was 13th by lap eight.

By contrast Bezzecchi began to assert his control up front. On lap four, 2.2sec covered the lead quartet, but by the 11th lap he had put 3.3sec between him and the chasing Marquez. His lead gradually increased from there, peaking at 7.18sec on lap 20.

His domination was such, maintaining concentration in the race's second half became his biggest obstacle.

"The first time I saw my pitboard, it said 13 to go. I said, 'Wow, the first 11 were really quick!' But from that moment, I was really desperate to finish." Even if he rolled off late on to ensure victory, no one got close.

Behind, Marquez initially had no answer for Bagnaia once the reigning champ took second on lap 15, after the pair had exchanged the place through Turns 9, 10 and 13. But once the Italian crashed out, the satellite rider was on the defensive once more as first Morbidelli closed to within a second on lap 17.

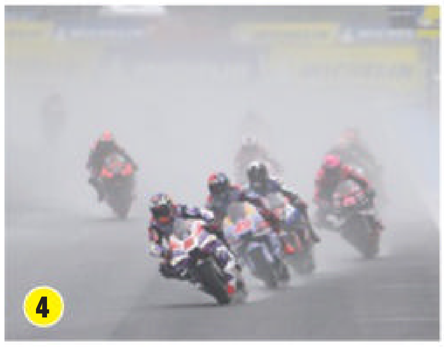
As the Yamaha man faded with diminished rear grip, it was Zarco's turn to hone in, after a typical late-race renaissance. With Jorge Martin (Pramac Ducati) in tow, the Frenchman rose through a tight fight for fifth by lap 13, with electronics issues slowing Di Giannantonio and visibility badly affecting Rins.

Zarco then used the next 10 laps to make up the 6sec deficit to Morbidelli. He gained the final podium place three laps from the flag, outbraking the Yamaha into Turn 5. But he wasn't done there, catching Marquez on the final lap and driving past on the exit of turn four to earn the 11th runner-up spot of his career.

Marquez was still content with his first podium since the autumn of 2020.

Morbidelli capped a weekend of resurgence in fourth, a place ahead of Martin, who just kept Miller at bay in fifth. Quartararo recovered well to take seventh, with Luca Marini (VR46 Ducati) also making it past Rins and Di Giannantonio.

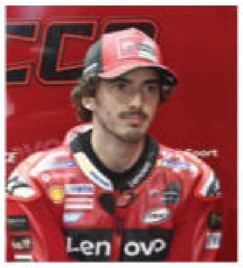
Bezzecchi (50pt) leads the title for the first time, ahead of Bagnaia (41), Zarco (35), Marquez (33) and Viñales (32).



> "YOU COULDN'T SEE A DAMN THING OUT OF THAT, SO YOU WERE STICKING YOUR HEAD UP DOWN THE STRAIGHT TRYING TO SEE"

PODIUM OF THE WEEKEND

Goes to Alex Marquez, who has grinded away with Honda since he joined the MotoGP title in 2020 - showing only rare snippets of his natural talent. A move to Gresini Ducati has come at just the right time to provide a much-needed spike, which begs the question: just how far can the brother-of-a-gun go in 2023?



OOPSIE OF THE WEEKEND

World champion Pecco Bagnaia was his own worst enemy in the first half of 2022, with the majority of his crashes coming down to brain fade. And so it was again in Argentina, and he'll now be steeling himself so it doesn't happen again - or at least not on a regular basis as the season continues to unfold.

8. Arbolino, Lopez and Dixon **9.** Moreiera slots his KTM into second position **10.** Suzuki's first Moto3 victory in three seasons **11.** The Argentine Moto3 podium: (L to R) Moreiera, Suzuki and Migno

MotoGP **SPRINT**

BINDER: 15TH TO FIRST!

THIS SCRAP CARRIED the same intensity and level of action as its inaugural running. Binder encapsulated this, rising from 15th to fifth at the first corner before picking off two more names by the end of lap one.

Morbidelli signalled his intentions early, diving under Marquez at Turn 1, then again at Turn 2 to hold an unlikely lead. But Binder - fresh from displacing Marquez - honed in, barging into the lead on the exit of Turn 9 on lap two.

All hell had broken loose behind, with Bezzecchi's attempts to recover from a poor start resulting in contact with Marini, Espargaro and Viñales in different incidents, while Bagnaia was also in the running. Viñales lost his right wing in the mayhem, while his teammate crashed out of seventh when attempting to close in on the leaders.

As Morbidelli faded, Binder's advantage was out to 0.8sec by the ninth lap. Marini then pounced on the Yamaha, taking second on lap nine, before Bezzecchi followed him through to third four corners later.

A lap later and Bezzecchi was by his teammate on the back straight. And he just ran out of time to displace Binder, the South African expertly defending into the race's final two turns. Marini was third, 0.8sec back.

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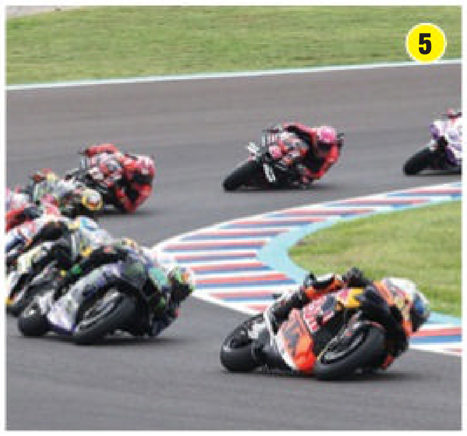

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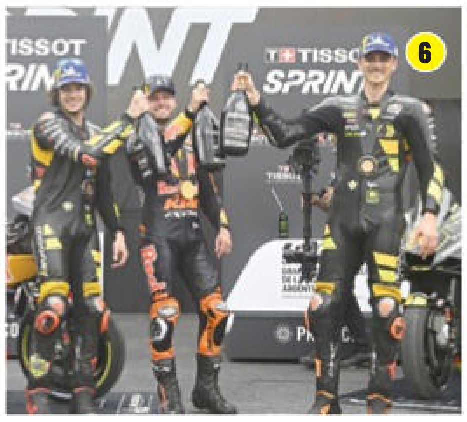


moto2

ARBOLINO ASSERTS CONTROL

THE MIDDLE RACE was reduced to two-thirds distance as the Moto2 men had no prior full wet running. "It's a long way to come for 14 laps," said Sam Lowes (Marc VDS Kalex). Not that his teammate Tony Arbolino was complaining, as the Italian produced another wet-weather masterclass to win his fourth race in the class and take the championship lead.

Arbolino was in the mix from the start, rising from eighth on the grid to sit fourth at the close of the opening lap. Pole man Alonso Lopez (Speed Up Boscoscuro) displaced early leader Jake Dixon (Aspar Kalex) on lap two, while Arbolino got past Aron Canet (Pons Kalex) when the Spaniard served the first of two long-lap penalties on lap three for jumping the start.

This lead trio then broke clear, with Lopez initially 0.7sec up on his two pursuers. Arbolino began plugging away soon after taking second off Dixon on lap three and had eradicated the gap by the 12th lap, when he pounced with a fine move at Turn 5. From there, the 22-year-old eased clear to win by 0.6sec from Lopez, with Dixon frustrated by visibility problems in third - not bad as he had learned of wife Sarah giving birth to their first daughter in England on Saturday night.

Canet recovered from his two penalties for a safe fourth, 7sec back of the victor, ahead of teammate Sergio Garcia (Pons Kalex), who impressively led home a high-speed sextet fighting for fifth in just his second Moto2 race. Darryn Binder (IntactGP Kalex), Filip Salac (Gresini Kalex), Somkiat Chantra (HTA Kalex), Albert Arenas (Ajo Kalex) and Lowes followed just behind.

8

moto3

SUZUKI WINS, ALMANSA THRILLS

TATSUKI SUZUKI (Leopard Honda) won out in a battle of attrition in the opening race of the day when a staggering nine of the 28 entries fell.

Pre-race expectations fell on polesitter Ayumu Sasaki, but it was his compatriot who assumed control once early leader Deniz Oncu's (Ajo KTM) lap-three highside occurred on the exit of Turn 9.

From there, it was mainly a straightforward cruise to a third grand prix victory - and a first since July, 2020. Jaume Masia (Leopard Honda) briefly threatened to deny him, posting the race's fastest lap the 13th time around as he tried to close down his teammate's 4sec lead, only to crash out Turn 2 the next time around.

Behind, this was a race for the substitutes. David Almansa (PruestelGP CFMOTO) was standing in for Joel Kelso, while Andrea Migno (CIP KTM) replaced Lorenzo Fellon, both injured in separate incidents in Portugal.

In many ways, Almansa was the star in his second ever showing, brawling ably with Sasaki, Diogo Moreiera (MSI KTM), David Muñoz (BOE KTM), Xavi Artigas (PruestelGP CFMoto), Dani Holgado (Tech3 KTM), Scott Ogden (VisionTrack Honda) and Riccardo Rossi (SIC58 Honda). But crashes for Sasaki, who highsided out of second on the exit of T13 on lap 10, and Artigas and Muñoz, who fell in unison at the same point, on lap 14, whittled the fight for second down to six.

A last-lap Ogden lunge at Turn 5 wiped Almansa out, clearing the way for Moreira to take second, 4.5sec behind Suzuki, and Migno third. Rossi threw fourth away, crashing two corners from home, leaving Ogden to cross the line in that place, only to be handed a 5sec time penalty, which put him behind Holgado.

9

10

11

Kelso Cutback

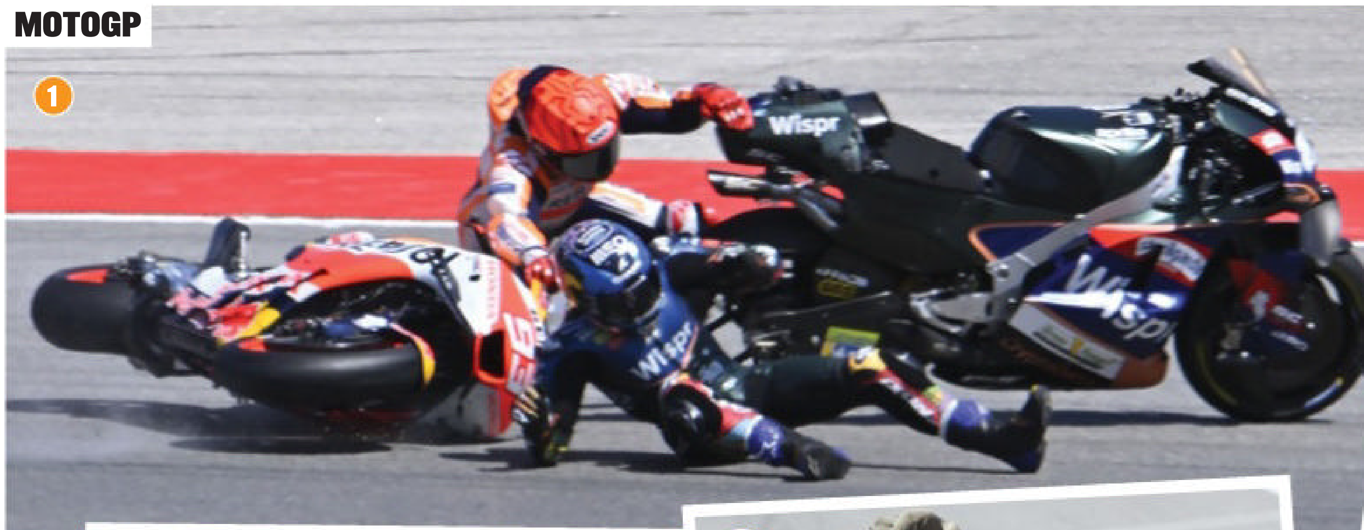
Moto3 **DNS**

KELSO MISSED Argentina as he recovers from the fracture to his left ankle, sustained in that frightening post-race collision in Portugal. The plucky Aussie is aiming to attempt to pass a fitness test to take part in the Grand Prix of the Americas, which will be held this weekend (14-16 April).

Exclusive!

NEWS FROM THE PADDOCK BY MOTOGP COMMENTATOR **NEIL MORRISON**

MOTOGP



HONDA APPEALS MARQUEZ PENALTY

Injuries and penalties spell tumultuous start to the season for HRC

THE FALLOUT from Marc Marquez and Miguel Oliveira's collision in Portugal continued one week on. First the FIM Stewards handed the #93 a double long-lap penalty which had to be specifically served in Argentina. As Marquez was absent from the round recovering from the first metacarpal fracture on his right hand, he could return to Austin and have no penalty to serve.

The FIM then amended the penalty on Wednesday when news that Oliveira would miss Argentina was released on Tuesday, stating "the double long-lap penalty shall be served by the rider at the next MotoGP race in which he will be able to participate".

But Repsol Honda countered, launching an appeal, rightly pointing to the dangerous precedent amending a penalty previously set.

"That this modification was issued by the FIM two days after the initial sanction was final and definitive, is not in line with the current regulations of the FIM for the MotoGP World Championship," read a team statement.

Whether it was careless or negligent wording, the FIM now appears set to be left red-faced. The FIM Appeal Stewards have now referred the case to the MotoGP Court of Appeal "for the adequate resolution of the case".

Many, including RNF Aprilia, are furious at the leniency of the sanction.

"The incident at the recent race between Marc Marquez and Miguel Olivera should serve as a wake-up call for riders in MotoGP, Moto2 and Moto3," read a team statement. "Thus, it's imperative that they're reminded of the severity of the punishment for any kind of reckless and irresponsible racing."

But Honda is within its rights to appeal the change in penalty. As if it knew the error of its ways, Sergio Garcia's penalty for riding into the back of Marcos Ramirez in Moto2 Q1 stated specifically "the long-lap penalty shall be served by the rider at the next GP race in which the rider participates".

Again, the FIM has been found lacking when needed to make a big call.

NEIL MORRISON

HONDA'S NIGHTMARE

AS IF MARC Marquez's absence wasn't bad enough, Joan Mir had the weekend from hell in Argentina, struggling to feel competitive all weekend on a low-grip track. The Majorcan qualified 18th and last before highsiding out on the first lap. The two-time world champ banged his ankle and hip in the fall, as well as suffering a nasty bout of concussion, ruling him out of Sunday's race.

Despite showing some promise on Friday, the LCR Hondas of Takaaki Nakagami and Alex Rins had a chastening Sprint race, finishing 11th and 15th respectively.

"More or less a similar feeling to Portimao," said an exasperated Rins. "It's so hard to stop the bike going into the corners, to reduce the speed. I'm not finding the way right now with these electronics, it's not enough. So it's clear that we need to improve on braking and on the traction side."

1. The big collision between Marquez and Oliveira **2.** And the aftermath, with Oliveira injuring tendons in his right leg and Marquez his right hand **3.** Mir's factory Honda in Argentina **4.** And the man himself, who highsided in the Sprint race and banged himself up **5.** Morbidelli was the renaissance man in Argentina **6.** Party time: a maiden MotoGP win for Mooney VR46 **7.** Espargaro has a long convalescence ahead of him, but the prognosis is positive

MOTOGP

MORBIDELLI'S REDEMPTION

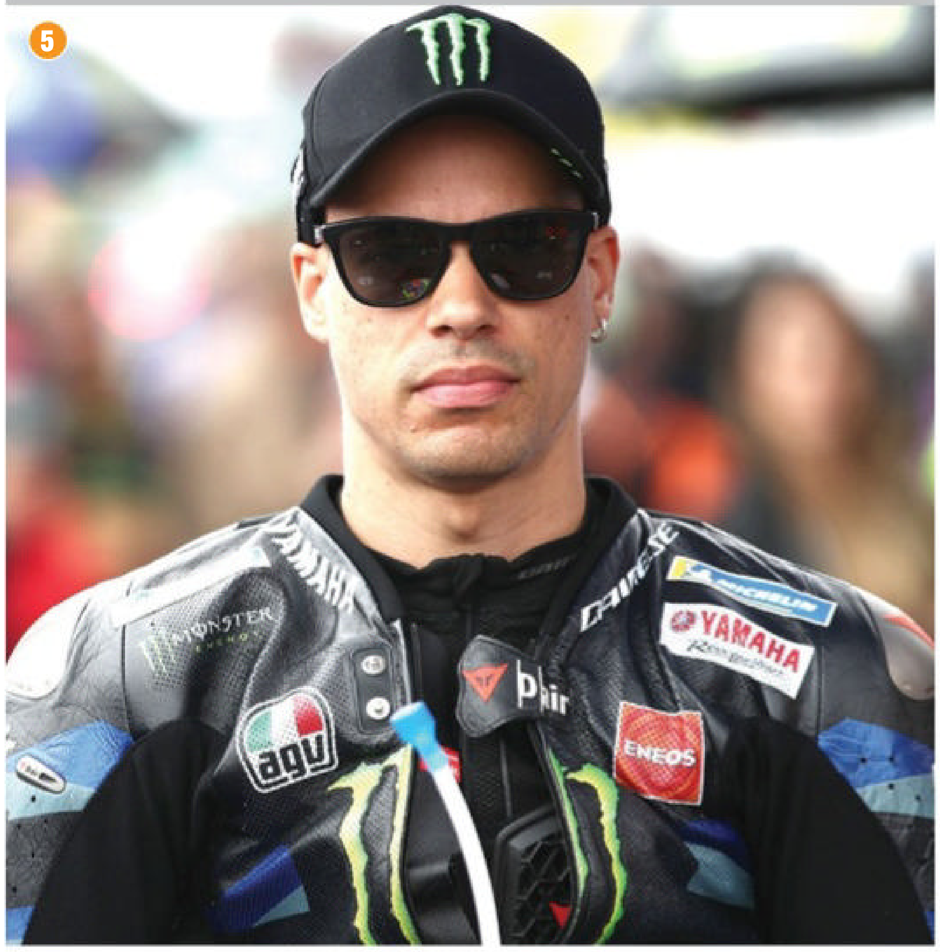
FRANCO MORBIDELLI enjoyed his strongest weekend since the start of 2021 - before his serious knee injury - as the Italian finished fourth and the top Yamaha in a pair of combative performances in Argentina.

Morbidelli appeared devoid of belief and shot of confidence through preseason, unable to find a direction aboard the new Yamaha YZR-M1. But on a low-grip track he was transformed, leading the early laps of the Sprint and defending well from faster Ducatis at the end, notably on the 1.1km back straight where he could defend from their slipstream.

"They did a great work on improving the engine," he said of Yamaha's off-season. "We have much more potential this year and that's great. It feels so good. I'm so full of joy."

Teammate Fabio Quartararo had a tough weekend overall, and was at pains to find a working setting to deal with low grip conditions in the dry.

"We have two riding styles that are totally different and the tracks where there is low grip," explained the Frenchman. "He is aggressive on the brakes and with corner speed. I am missing in some areas so here I am struggling to do it." NM



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MOTOGP

VR46 DUCATI CELEBRATES

UCCIO SALUCCI, Team Director of Mooney VR46 Ducati, spoke of the immense pride he felt at the team's maiden MotoGP triumph.

"I just spoke with Vale and told him today's obviously different but I have the same feeling. I have a big emotion because this project started in 2014 with our Moto3 team. Then we entered Moto2 with the same guys.

"We have a lot of passion in our team. We have great riders, we brought them through the (VR46) Academy. This makes it even more special.

"To see Marini on the podium yesterday, and Bezzecchi winning today and first in the championship, first in the Team's Championship, and it's in our second year!

"Woah, it's like a huge dream for me. Bezz is a dark horse! He's a fantastic guy and it's special to work with him.

"We're in a good moment but not so easy to manage. We don't have a lot of experience in MotoGP. But we'll go to Austin and remain calm. After we'll see what happens!" NM

MOTOGP

POL'S FACING LENGTHY SPELL ON SIDELINES

POL ESPARGARO is recovering well from his horror smash in Portugal. But the Catalan faces a lengthy spell on the sidelines as he recovers from four fractured vertebrae in his back.

"If we want to see the positive side, Pol is going to come back with a possibility to have a normal life and be a full-time MotoGP rider again," said team boss Hervé Poncharal. "We weren't sure about this when we saw the crash. This is good news.

"The negative news is he's in a lot of pain. He's had an operation on his jaw and can't open the mouth. The lungs are okay now, but a few vertebra have been broken without any consequence for the future. He needs to wear a corset for a while for the bones to heal. We'll let nature to do its job - it looks like it'll be a long recovery. At the moment there is still a question mark for Mugello (in June).

KTM test rider Jonas Folger will deputise from round three of the championship. NM

7

1. Doyle (centre) has started the season in red-hot form **2.** O'Halloran to the rescue! The Aussie can now add lifesaver to his CV... **3.** Hopefully we'll see Hutchy doing this again in 2024 **4.** Smith keeps on keeping on, and has added another Condo 750 to his collection **5.** Simmonds was pushed hard in the Tassie Superbike opener **6.** The Wanneroo 3 Hour winners: Langley (left) and Cook

SPEEDWAY

DOYLEY ON SONG!

Jason Doyle kicks off 2023 in winning style

JASON DOYLE has made a great start to the European speedway season with victories in two major meetings in England. When Sam Masters staged his testimonial meeting at Wolverhampton on 26 March there were 11 Australians among the 18 riders who took to the track.

Doyle led the scorers from the heats and then beat Freddie Lindgren, Scott Nicholls and Jacob Thorssell in the final. Max Fricke was the next best of the Aussie contingent bowing out in the last-chance qualifier.

The Peter Craven Memorial Meeting was staged at Belle Vue on 3 April and Doyle left as the first-ever four-time winner of the meeting. Brady Kurtz was the top qualifier to go straight into the six-rider final where he finished fourth behind Doyle, SGP duo Robert Lambert and Dan Bewley, and ahead of Charles Wright and Dane Niels-Kristian Iversen.

Hopefully those wins will provide a foundation for a much improved showing for Doyle when the Speedway Grand Prix series commences on the last weekend of April.

PETER BAKER

GO WEST!

IN THE lead-in to the Easter weekend's Australian Speedway Sidecar Championship, a number of big names from the eastern states headed west early to get some experience on the Pinjar Park track - and for a number of them it was the first visit.

Reigning national champions Mark Plaisted/Ben Pitt made it very worthwhile with back-to-back victories in two major 'warm-ups'.

Firstly they won the King of Pinjar on 18 March, beating former Australian junior champion rider Jack Fewster/Jonah Sita, Brodie Cohen/Jesse Headland and Darrin Treloar/Blake Cox in a tight contest.

One week later even more interstaters were on hand, but it was the same finalists this time with Plaisted/Pitt victorious in the Jeff Gittus Sidecar Memorial ahead of Treloar/Cox, Cohen/Headland and Fewster/Sita. PB

STARS UNALIGNED

TWO BIG NAME signings to league teams in the UK for 2023 are Emil Sayfutdinov at Ipswich and Nicki Pedersen at Peterborough - for both it is more than a decade since they raced in a UK league but they could not have had more different returns when they were in opposition on their first night.

Pedersen crashed on the opening lap of his first heat and withdrew from the meeting with back pain.

In sharp contrast, Sayfutdinov was beaten only once in five rides and combined with Jason Doyle to ensure an Ipswich victory.

BSB

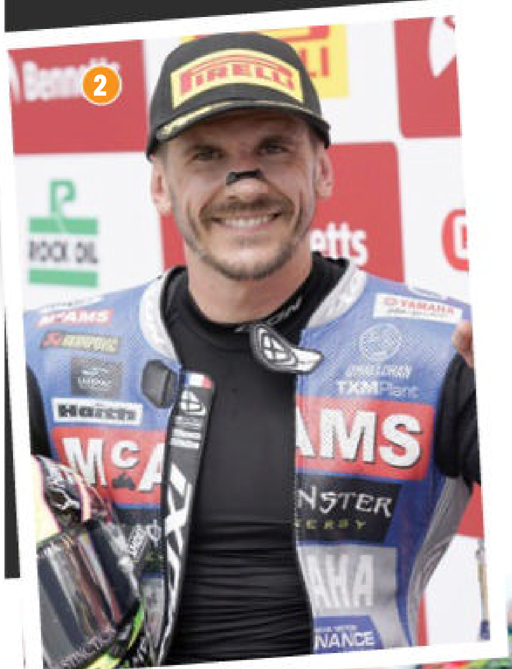
HUTCHY: JASON SAVED MY LIFE

TT STAR Ian Hutchinson, forced to sit out this year's Isle of Man TT after suffering a stroke, is crediting Aussie BSB racer Jason O'Halloran with saving his life. The 16-time TT winner was cycling in Spain in February with O'Halloran when the medical emergency happened.

O'Halloran said: "It was a scary day, that's for sure, and after that to see the progress he had, and how fast the progress was that week, was incredible."

In line with sporting protocols, Hutchinson is out of this season's racing but will attend the TT to meet fans and his TAS Racing Team sponsors.

Hamish Cooper



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RALLY

4
Max Sullivan

SMITH FOR SIX!

THE LONG-awaited 30th running of the Condo 750 was run over 1-2 April with Jacob Smith (Husqvarna) using his Dakar experience to lead the field on the opening day. With clean air, Smith set the pace and kept Lachlan Manwaring (KTM) and Toby Hederics (KTM) at bay until a closed gate forced the top three riders together until the end of the second section.

The overgrown tracks made navigation tough and Smith clipped a stump on the third stage for the day, sending him cartwheeling into the dirt. Dazzled but not injured, he remounted and beat Manwaring to the Day 1 finish line by four minutes.

With the fastest time from the previous day, Smith led out and kept a clean air filter while Manwaring and Hederics had to contend with the dust. Smith had a flawless run on the final day, making no errors and taking a record sixth win. Manwaring finished second, just 4m30s behind Smith after 8.5 hours racing, with Hederics completing the podium.

MAX SULLIVAN

SRCT

TASSIE TITLE KICKS OFF

ENTRIES MAY have been down slightly for Round 1 of the Tasmanian Road Race Championship but spectators watched some exciting racing at Symmons Plains on 19 March.

The Superbike class saw the return of Brett Simmonds (Honda) but this time his usual total dominance was challenged by Jason Spencer (Honda). Spencer pushed hard, leading several races before Simmonds took the win in the dying stages. Their pace was so hot that Scott Campbell (Yamaha) and Scott Honeychurch (Kawasaki) couldn't stay with them.

Low numbers meant the Supersport class was combined with the Superbikes. Lockie Curtis (Suzuki) rose to the challenge, winning his class and finishing either sixth or seventh overall in the four races. The combined race for Clubmen and Clubmen Pro proved to be the most exciting set of four all day. Trevor Renton (KTM), Martin Long (Yamaha), Harley Phipps (Honda), Chloe Honeychurch (Kawasaki) and Luke van Egdom (Honda) were separated by less than a second at times.

Honeychurch won two races with Renton and Long taking out the other two events.

KEN YOUNG

MRCWA

6
John Innes

ENDURING WANNEROO

THE PAIRING of Jack Langley (MotoMAX Yamaha R1) and Josh Cook (CMS Aprilia RSV4) won a hard-fought Wanneroo 3 Hour race that involved several safety car call-outs.

Second in the season opener were reigning WA Superbike champion Cameron Stronach and George Moorhead (Yamaha), with the 600cc class pairing of Lino Mazzali and Paul Joshua (Yamaha) taking third.

The fastest of the pairs among the 58 riders entered contested Superpole with Ben Stronach (Yamaha) taking the honours ahead of younger brother Cameron, with Langley third.

Cameron led the race for 36 laps until Steven Martin (Kawasaki) took over for 12 laps.

Langley took the lead on lap 52 and stayed in front for 24 laps, with rider changes adding another dimension. The safety car was deployed after several incidents, but the Langley/Cook combination took back the lead on lap 102 and they never relinquished it.

Jayden Martin (KTM) took pole in the Production GP support race and led from start to finish.

JOHN INNES

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WORDS **MATT O'CONNELL** + PHOTOGRAPHY **ROB MOTT**

BRIAN BOLSTER

We get in the ear of an inaugural SuperTwins Cup podium finisher to discuss some of the more controversial aspects of the new national class

The new-for-2023 ASBK SuperTwins Cup class is hanging in the balance, with nine entries required to run at the Queensland Raceway event scheduled for 28-30 April. In the initial press release it was announced the class would run alongside Supersport, prompting immediate safety concerns.

There were also concerns based around cost and the overall benefit of providing a stepping stone between Supersport 300 and Supersport. The class debuted at the opening Phillip Island round in February with only four entries and the performance disparity was largely proven well founded, complicated by a swollen Supersport grid. SuperTwins had to be conducted as a race within a race, with the SuperTwins riders pulling in after five laps. Suzuki SV650-mounted Brian Bolster was one of the inaugural entrants, and he was happy with the way the event unfolded.

"Motorcycling Australia was pretty amicable about finding a solution. We figured we would be lapped about lap six, so we agreed to finish our race at lap five. We all pulled into the pits after five laps and it worked quite well. We love this class and we want to see it succeed, but if there were any safety incidents I think that would be the death knell for SuperTwins."

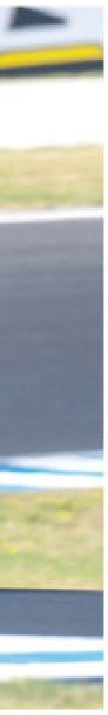
At club level around the country SuperTwins have an almost cult following, with riders salvaging machines at auction for minimal outlay and then fitting aftermarket parts to get them race ready.

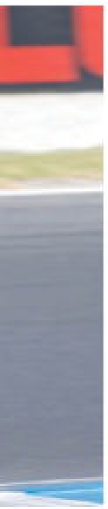
Around the world the midsized twin format is hugely popular both in the showroom and on the track, with grids in the MotoAmerica series regularly exceeding 25 entries. The grid is made up of predominantly serious racers riding either Yamaha YZF-R7s or Aprilia RS660s – with the occasional 'club' racer showing up on a SV650 at a local round.

"At club level we lean more towards the American and British rules where you can do front-end swaps, rear wheel swaps, increase the horsepower, that type of thing," Bolster explained. "Every other major championship in the world is using Twins as a way to bridge the gap between 300 and 600, both performance-wise and cost-wise."

Under ASBK rules there are four machines homologated:

1. The first ever SuperTwins podium from Phillip Island: (L to R) Peter Nerlich, Cori Bourne and Brian Bolster **2.** Nerlich on the YZF-R7 **3.** Bourne (Aprilia RS660) took home maximum points at Phillip Island's round one **4.** Blake Davis leads the way in the competitive MotoAmerica Twins Cup **5.** Bolster at Sydney Motorsport Park on the SV650 **6.** And more Bolster action, this time at Phillip Island **7.** And a triple Bolster, this time under lights back at SMSP!





> THE APRILIA IS BY FAR THE MOST EXPENSIVE, REQUIRING APPROXIMATELY $35K TO GET ON THE TRACK

the RS660, YZF-R7, SV650 and Kawasaki Ninja 650. The Aprilia is by far the most expensive, requiring approximately $35k to get on the track. It's also heavily restricted in weight and revs.

This restriction means there is approximately a 7.5kW (10hp) difference between the Aprilia and the Japanese bikes.

This raises the question: considering the up-front cost, would it be a better option to simply strike out the Aprilia from eligibility if it needs to be restricted so heavily?

Bolster thinks a good solution is allowing certain modifications to the Japanese bikes to level the horsepower difference, which by his calculations would make a YZF-R7 or an SV650 similar in cost to the Aprilia.

"While it is expensive and you would have to have the work done on your bike, some of us, like me – I'm a Suzuki guy through and through – we can be competitive," he said. "We would just have to 'build' the bikes, like they do in America," adding that a good balance was required.

"In America you're allowed expensive wheels and electronics; that's not needed in my opinion. There just needs to be a working compromise."

The tighter ASBK machine regulations are seen as a benefit for the long term, but the problem is that the class has to become established in the first place. Interestingly, MotoAmerica promotes its Twins Cup as "a rapidly evolving race class that initially enabled regional and club racers from around the country to step up to the MotoAmerica series and compete on a national level". And in Europe, the R7 Cup is promoted as "a series and an event in which dad can race alongside his kids, or friends can compete to finally prove who is the fastest."

The reigning MotoAmerica Twins Cup champion is Aprilia mounted 16-year-old, Blake "Juice Box" Davis.

Speaking informally to some of the riders that made the step up to Supersport this year, the general consensus was that jumping from a 300 to a 600 was a perfectly achievable step – and it's difficult to argue with that view considering the results (Cameron Dunker won in just his fourth Supersport race). Reading between the lines, it also means none of the young racers progressing from Supersport 300 saw an opportunity or viable benefit from winning the ASBK SuperTwins Cup.

It all amounts to an interesting conundrum: how does Motorcycling Australia set a formula that attracts competitors while keeping the standard worthy of a national class?

Hopefully we will see the numbers at Queensland Raceway and devotees like Bolster can help find a solution.

S-1

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PAUL SINDERBERRY HIS RECORD OF FOUR CONDO 750 WINS HELD FOR MORE THAN 15 YEARS

“IT WAS THE ONLY PENALTY I INCURRED IN FIVE SAFARIS”

Top: Sinderberry’s passion has always been on the land – farming and racing!

Above: Helping out his ultra-talented showjumping daughter, Madeline

IN THE 1980s, there’s no doubt the Wynn’s Sydney to Darwin Safari had a profound impact on Australia’s off-road racing enthusiasts. By that time, the BP-sponsored Sunraysia Desert Rally had come and gone, and the Broken Hill-based AMCO 1000 proved a one hit wonder. Only the Tattersalls Finke Desert Race survived, but in those days it was only the very accomplished or the very ambitious who weren’t thrashed by the locals on the arduous track between Alice Springs and Aputula.

Held in 1987, the third Wynn’s Safari was routed through Condobolin, with many locals on the checkpoints. Enthused by the concept of cross-country rallying, the Condo Auto Sports Club, with guidance from Safari course director Bob Carpenter, designed its own two-day navigational rally – and in Australia’s bicentennial year of 1988, challenged all comers to take on the locals. The event was called the Condo 750.

For more than six years, young Paul Sinderberry watched outlanders such as Steve Riley, John Hederics and Michael Goddard hoover up the silverware. Then, in 1996, Sinderberry was celebrated as Condobolin’s first hometown hero and, by 2003, became the first rider to win the event four times.

During this purple patch, Paul took a shot at the 1996 Australian Safari from Adelaide to Townsville, then the 15-day marathon from Cairns to the Gold Coast via Uluru the following year. That event was won by Andy Haydon, giving KTM its first Safari victory, and Andy an entry to the Paris-Dakar. Second place scored Sinderberry a position on the factory-supported GHR Honda Team in the 2002 Australian Safari, only to come up against an in-form Andy Caldecott – the then current Australian Safari champion.

For the following three years, Sinderberry was the only competitor to come close to Caldecott’s dominant KTM 660 Rallye. He came closest in 2003, but a three-minute time penalty on a transport section proved critical.

“It was the only penalty I incurred in five Safaris,” recalls Sinderberry, who lost to Caldecott by a margin of 2m58s – the closest in Australian Safari history.

Meantime, Sinderberry had married his girlfriend Sarah, their first daughter Emily was born, and his growing mob of Angus cattle was bellowing for attention.

“Farming has always been a chaotic business and I needed to knuckle down a bit,” says Sinderberry. “Our second daughter Madeline has won five Australian junior showjumping trials, so chasing her around the country also soaked a lot of family time.”

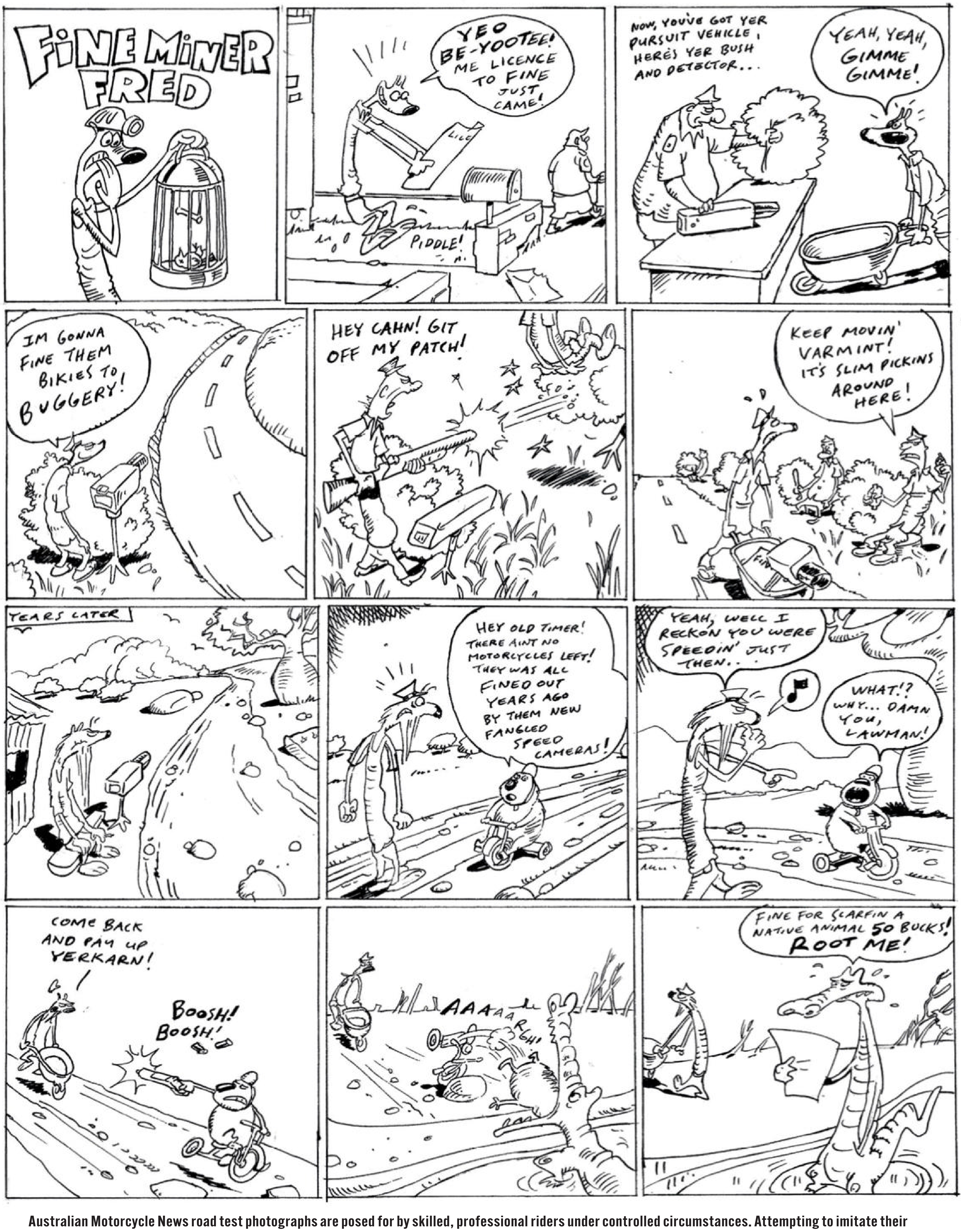
Still, every now and then, his 2000 Honda XR650R, brought up to 2004-spec by master technician Nick Dole, would be hosed down for another crack at the Condo. Sinderberry won the over-35 division twice and the over-45 division in 2017 and 2018; the latter with a top 10 outright finish. Not too shabby for a bloke who celebrated his 55th birthday earlier this year.

When AMCN pointed out the 2023 Condo 750 would mark the 20th anniversary of his historic fourth victory, Simderberry poured cold water on a return.

“Just too much other stuff going on,” he started. “We’ve expanded our business, and with the wild fluctuations in the weather (the Lachlan Shire was devastated by floods over the past few months) it’s getting harder and harder to get time to go motorcycle racing.”

Then again, he purchased a Honda Africa Twin in early 2021 to enjoy seeing the country at a more leisurely pace. This has included a ride across the Simpson Desert, a week in Tasmania, a run through the Flinders Ranges, an “an Aussie crossing may be in the wind”. Sounds like a bloke who should have more than enough time for a two-day dash around Condo...

PETER WHITAKER


FINE MINER FRED
YEO BE-YOOTEE! ME LICENCE TO FINE JUST CAME!
LICC
PIDDLE!
NOW, YOU'VE GOT YER PURSUIT VEHICLE, HERE'S YER BUSH AND DETECTOR...
YEAH, YEAH, GIMME GIMME!
IM GONNA FINE THEM BIKIES TO BUGGERY!
HEY CAHN! GIT OFF MY PATCH!
KEEP MOVIN' VARMINT! IT'S SLIM PICKINS AROUND HERE!
YEARS LATER
HEY OLD TIMER! THERE AINT NO MOTORCYCLES LEFT! THEY WAS ALL FINED OUT YEARS AGO BY THEM NEW FANGLED SPEED CAMERAS!
YEAH, WELL I RECKON YOU WERE SPEEDIN' JUST THEN..
WHAT!? WHY... DAMN YOU, LAWMAN!
COME BACK AND PAY UP YERKARN!
BOOSH! BOOSH!
AAAAARGH!
FINE FOR SCARFIN A NATIVE ANIMAL 50 BUCKS! ROOT ME!

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